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BALLADS

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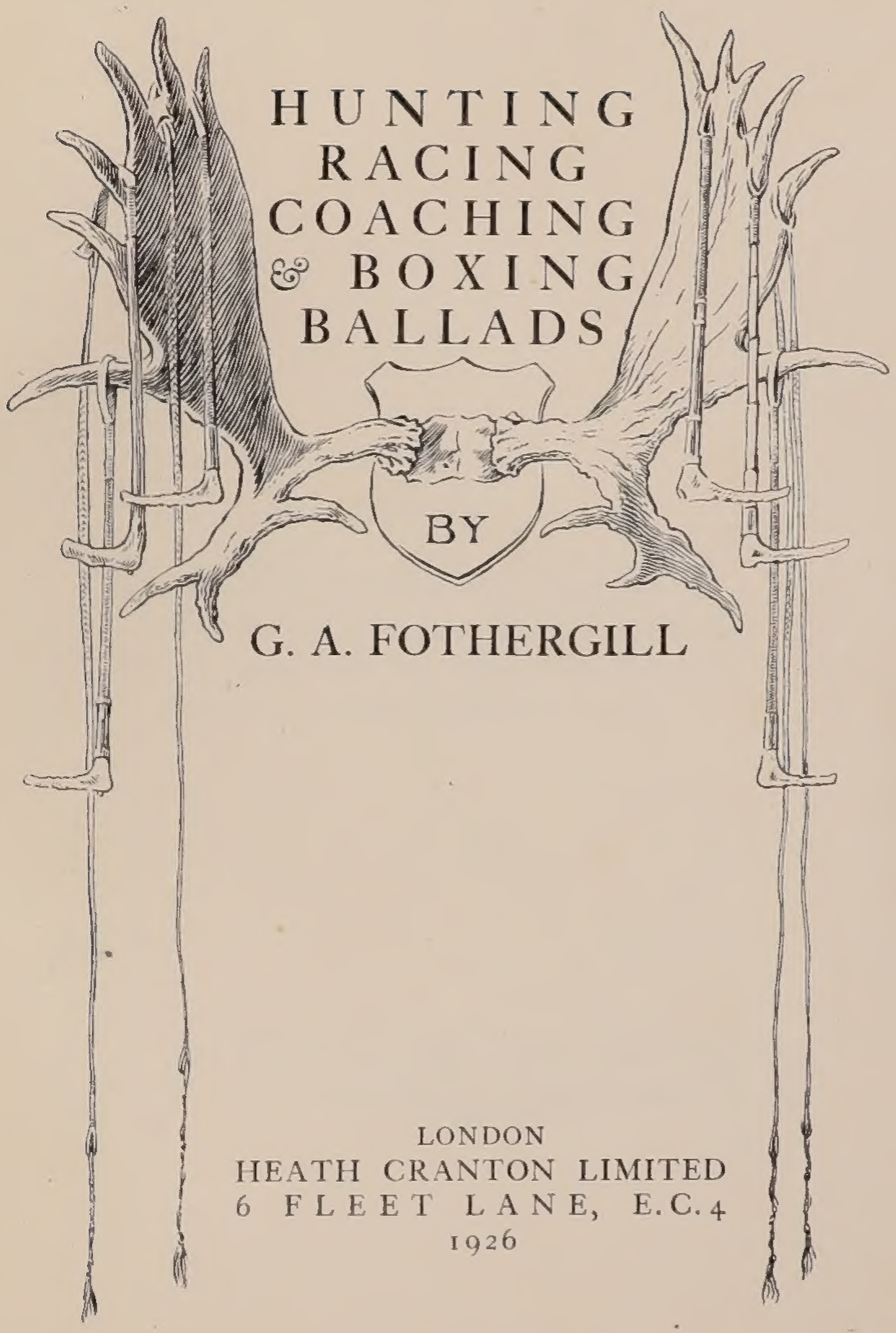


SAM MORGAN, JUNR., huntsman of the L. & S., on JEDDAH.

Ruby *Seaman* *Factor* *Donovan*

DRAWN BLANK. *Sam Morgan, Junr., with the Linlithgow and Stirlingshire Foxhounds, in* 1914.

Reproduced from a large print (one of only five so tinted by the artist himself) in the possession of Seton M. Thomson, Esq., of Preston House, Linlithgow.



HUNTING RACING COACHING & BOXING BALLADS

BY

G. A. FOTHERGILL

LONDON
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The Thirteenth of May

The day before Old May Day I was born,
And received by a horny blow[1] *and a nurse;*
The day before Old May Day I was wed
To a Hieland lass for better for worse.

[1] Dr. R. E. B. Horniblow of 24 Lansdowne Place, Leamington, Warwickshire, himself a good archer and husband of the most famous lady archer of all time (see Badminton Book on Archery), was my mother's accoucheur at Leamington, on the 13th May, 1868.



PREFACE

To ride a horse was my first ambition ; to draw and paint him was my next ; and to write about him, my last ambition.

I had realised all three before the close of last century, having enjoyed my first day on a horse (15.1 hands) with hounds as far back as 1879, before I was twelve ; done many portraits of horses of all sorts, as well as hunting sketches ; and written and published (in 1895) my first book—*A Riding Retrospect*—which I dedicated to my father and uncles, coupled with the owners of 'Clinker' and 'The Dream' (respectively Colonel Charles Menzies of Kames, ex-Master of the Berwickshire, and 'Jack' Drybrough, the most famous polo back of his day and one of the best welter-weights to hounds of any country).

Only a few of these ballads and rhymes have so far been published. Some appeared in *Baily's Magazine*, viz. 'The Master of the Horse,' 'Old Age at the Covert-side,' 'Bucking Sally,' 'Of Warwickshire Lads,' and 'Muntz's Robin Red.' 'A Bishop on the Box' was published in *The Scottish Chronicle* ; 'Resigning the Pink' in *An Advocate of the Past* ; and not more than a dozen of them were included in *An Artist's Thoughts in Verse and Design*, which I published in January 1920. One came out in *The Student* (Edin. Univ.) ; and another one, 'Coaching in the Lake Country,' a lyric

of twenty-six lines, appeared in *Country Life*; but I have added a good many lines to the latter, and introduce it here under a fresh title, 'The Recollection of a Westmorland Coach Horn.' Two other short rhymes were published in the *Westmorland Gazette*. My best thanks are due to the editors of those magazines and papers for allowing me to print the verses in this book.

As regards the plates, tailpieces, etc., I should say these were not done purposely for the book: they are merely a miscellaneous selection from some of my best drawings used here to embellish the texts. They are, however, more or less appropriate, most of them horsy, and all directly or indirectly associated with sport. The frontispiece and the sixteen plates have never appeared in a book, paper or magazine before; and only three of the page ornaments have so far been published, namely, 'The Five Beasts of the Chase,' the mosaic 'Racing—1910,' and the 'Westmorland Coaching Scene,' all three of which (two in another form) were used for my *Twenty Sporting Designs* some fifteen years ago.

GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL.

Old Farmhouse,
Cramond Bridge, West Lothian,
September 1926.

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PLATE I.

The Irony of Fate. *Painted in* 1912.

Once a brilliant 'chaser, of brilliant huntress born;
Next a hopeless hireling of his glory shorn.
Now the hack of gipsies, turned out on the grass,
Waiting for the sunset of his life to pass.



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From large Water-Colour Drawings, etc.,
by
George Algernon Fothergill, M.B., C.M.,
Late M.O. First Cavalry Brigade.

Drawn Blank—Sam Morgan, Junr., with the L. & S. 1914 - *Frontispiece*

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JACK HORNER'S 'NATIONAL

INSCRIBED TO
A Sporting and generous American,
MR. A. CHARLES SCHWARTZ

JACK HORNER'S 'NATIONAL

(Run at Aintree on Friday, 26th March, 1926)

As early as seven a score of smart motors
Tooted on to the course, all bearing their quotas
Of owners and friends come on purpose to see
Thirty horses at exercise, cantering free.

* * * * * *

Half-a-million—North, South, East and West with their wives—
Are seeking a red-letter day for their lives.
But the Prince[1] is not here, and his presence is missed.
The stands are chock-full, and some pockets are fleeced ;
The saddling's in progress, the favourites are kissed ;
The bookies are roaring, and the course well policed.

'What will win the Grand National ?' The hour has arrived
When we'll all know in less than ten minutes of time.
The betters are anxious, though all have contrived

[1] The Prince of Wales was prevented from putting in an appearance, as he was in the hands of his physician and surgeon—an operation impending for an abscess in the middle ear following influenza. But Prince Henry and Princess Arthur of Connaught attended the meeting with Lord Derby's party.

To give themselves hope (and betting's no crime)—
'What will win the Grand National?' 's the popular chime.

In the battle for favourites Sprig's most in demand;
Silvo and Old Tay Bridge still stand
Where they were, the Silvo division well pleased
That the course rides firm, and their hearts are eased.

* * * * * *

The paddock doors open, they're led out for parade
In front of the stands, and we see how they're made;
Here's a few of their points as they march in a row:—
Old Tay Bridge—a 'chaser from poll to toe;
Pop Ahead—very strong, a useful-like geldin'
Whose name would imply that he *must* not be held in;
And Koko, a clipper, looks round rather slyly
At the Irish regarding his chance very highly.
A proper good type (if she'd only behave)
Is another from Ireland—Grecian Wave;[1]
Then there's Darracq, as hard as a nail all over,
Blinker'd to-day and as pert as a plover.
Dwarf of the Forest's a bit too small,
Pencoed's another that's not very tall;
Young Knight of the Wilderness some would call striking,
Well enough in himself, but not *quite* to our liking—

[1] Grecian Wave beat Blancona in Ireland, but ran out in the Grand Sefton, which he might have won easily from Ardeen.

He comes from old Ireland very well taught
But is hardly we think of the Liverpool sort.
Midwood's Silvo—the best bred horse in the race
Who to Maid of the Mint and St. Simon can trace,
And the greatest steeplechase horse in the world
Some would say, though of late his proud flag's been furled.
Sixteen-two hands in height is the favourite Sprig,
Leader's turned him out fit and trained him big ;
Gerald L. of past glory,[1] Owen Anthony's charge,
Bears the white crescents gaily, looks well and looks large.
Jack Horner[2]—what heart room ! and oh, what a shoulder !
What legs ! and never a horse that looked bolder—
Those fences have nothing of terror for *him*,
He will charge at the lot like a brave Cherry-bim ;[3]
What scope ! what length of gaskin and thigh !
Lean neck, clean head, not carried too high,
With determination there in his eye ;
Broad bone and wide tendon and loins far from slack—
This is the horse of the troop we shall back.

The parade quickly over, they move to the post,
There to resemble a harlequin host.

[1] Winner of the Scottish Grand National in 1925.

[2] Jack Horner is by Cyllius (by Cyllene out of a Galopin mare)—Melton's Gutde (by Melton), and goes back to Bend Or, Doncaster, Voltigeur and Stockwell.

[3] Owing to the colour of their 'breeks' the 11th Hussars were christened Cherry-bims

Some are sober, some not—they reach and they dance,
And the real unruly catch the starter's keen glance.
Whipping round, there's a savage in front on his toes
Showing teeth—where he'll use 'em the Lord only knows !
A little rough play of the sort caballine
In the order at first, but a tongue leonine
Roars ' Back there, you three ! ' ' Come up Number Nine ! '
And with such-like expressions they're all up in line.

The barrier released, they are off and are fled,
All good 'uns to go though not all well bred,
No horse but has willingly sprung from the post—
And not every starter could make this boast.
A shout rent the air, the excitement intense
To see them shoot out for the primary fence.

As they settled to work it was Darracq who led,
The horse has a heart and the jockey a head ;
And Sprig and Misconduct, Bright's Boy and White Surrey
With most of the others take part in the scurry.

At the first wall of green ten have it together,
And twenty more follow these ' birds of a feather.'
Only three down this year (we remember once *six*—
Horses, jockeys and bridles like so many sticks



PLATE II

UNSADDLING. *The model for the horse in the foreground was Mr. Moffat S. Thomson's Awbeg, which won for him eleven three-mile steeplechases in Scotland and the North of England from* 1920 *to* 1922. *Awbeg had won the Conyngham Cup at Punchestown in* 1917, *finished ninth in the Grand National of* 1918, *and was killed at Becher's Brook in the National of* 1922

Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1922.

[illegible]er, and then looms Becher's Brook.
[illegible]beware just here of the wiles of the [illegible]--
Don't bustle your mount or he'll go to pot,
It's killed one horse [3] and it's lamed a lot ;
So steady him well as you ride for the flight,
' Remember the drop and sit back tight '—
[illegible] hand—

[1] It wo[illegible] in the 'Nati[illegible] Shaun Spadah (winner in 1921), [illegible] here.

[2] Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux's grey gelding ; aged fourtee[illegible] than any other horse in the race.

[3] Mr. Moffat S. Thomson's Awbeg killed here in 1922 [illegible] gelding had won the Cunyngham Cup easily in 1917, and [illegible] in the North of England and Scotland, 1920-22.



PLATE II

UNSADDLING. *The model for the horse in the foreground was Mr Moffat S. Thomson's Awbeg, which won for him eleven three-mile steeplechases in Scotland and the North of England from 1920 to 1922. Awbeg had won the Conyngham Cup at Punchestown in 1917, finished ninth in the Grand National of 1918, and was killed at Becher's Brook in the National of 1922*

Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1922.

In a stickyard—and favourites too [1]—what a fix !)
It is Silvo to-day and Grecian Wave
That come back to the land—nearly into a grave !
' A favourite down ! ' ' A favourite defeated ! '
Were the echoing notes that the crowd repeated.

At the next one, Wallsend and old White Surrey [2]
Come in for some trouble and are felled by the flurry,
Number three sends another one rolling over,
With rider and horse biting the clover.

Another, and then looms Becher's Brook.
Now, beware just here of the wiles of the crook—
Don't bustle your mount or he'll go to pot,
It's killed one horse [3] and it's lamed a lot ;
So steady him well as you ride for the flight,
' Remember the drop and sit back tight '—
The wise, wise words of an old race hand—

[1] It was in the 'National of 1922 that the two first favourites, Southampton and Shaun Spadah (winner in 1921), came down heavily here.

[2] Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux's grey gelding ; aged fourteen, and older by two years than any other horse in the race.

[3] Mr. Moffat S. Thomson's Awbeg killed here in 1922. This fine big bold chestnut gelding had won the Conyngham Cup easily in 1917, and won twelve three-mile 'chases in the North of England and Scotland, 1920-22.

And Dollery knew how a horse should land,
Cloister and he could show 'em the way :
Such were the thoughts of some to-day,
As they sat well back and rode that way.

Lee Bridge comes a crumpler first time round,
And while struggling to rise Koko comes with a bound
And jostles him badly, and takes a good purler,
Giving Hamey more shakes than are nice in the whirler.
Four at least here are flattened—if this is not strife,
What is ?—every man in his hand holds his life—
Knocked out ; torn legs ; broken arm ; going lame—
Stern realities—all in the 'chasing game.

On they go galloping, Valentine's passed,
The pace becomes hotter and terribly fast ;
The eight-year-old Test Match, L'Estrange in the saddle,
At the next one is down and has lost the skedaddle.
Sprig pushes along and is up at the lead,
To be headed again by Darracq's great greed.

Over the water shot Darracq ahead,
And into the country the game horse sped,
Where Misconduct improved his position, Gerald L.,
Pop Ahead, and some others going stronger as well.





PLATE III

AWBEG IN LIFE AND DEATH. *The top photo shows Sergeant Murphy jumping close to Awbeg, lying dead by Becher's Brook in the 'National of* 1922. *The lower one is of Awbeg (with the author up) as he appeared at Aldershot in* 1919 *when owned by Captain Renton of the* 11*th Hussars*

[illegible]

Nearing [illegible] to some are [illegible]
But Jack Horner [illegible] and as fresh as a daisy,
Loan Hand took a 'knocking' too deep from the top,
Turned over complete and went down with a flop.

Near the rail to the left to the red flag's corner
There rose at the fence the clever Jack Horner;
He came over it clean and got into his stride,
And went on in his Melton and Galoper pride.

'Old Tay,' full of running, is seen on the left,
Of none of his gameness and courage bereft;
As he nears the Canal Turn he looks like winning,
Where Crab Boy and rider are both sent spinning.

[illegible]

And the hearts of some riders continue to yearn
For a little more powder to bring on their turn
To be even with him at the next pair of flags.

[1] The writer has never seen Old Tay Bridge so written [illegible] Scotsmen speaking of him as brand Scots, also stable-boys call[illegible]





PLATE III.

AUBEG IN LIFE AND DEATH. *The top photo shows Sergeant Murphy jumping close to Aubeg, lying dead by Becher's Brook in the National of 1922. The lower one is of Aubeg (with the author up) as he appeared at Aldershot in 1919 when owned by Captain Renton of the 11th Hussars.*

With six lengths to spare, Darracq now has the lead
While Gurney, his pilot, knees hard for more speed,
Master Billie, Lone Hand, Jack Horner and Sprig
Coming hot in pursuit with the *Auld Tay Brig*.[1]

Nearing Becher's once more some are blown and some lazy,
But Jack Horner goes well and as fresh as a daisy ;
Loan Hand took a ' knocking ' too deep from the top,
Turned over complete and went down with a flop.

Near the rail to the left in the red flag's corner
There rose at the fence the clever Jack Horner ;
He came over it clean and got into his stride,
And went on in his Melton and Galopin pride.

' Old Tay,' full of running, is seen on the left,
Of none of his gameness and courage bereft ;
As he nears the Canal Turn he looks like winning,
Where Cash Box and rider are both sent spinning.

There are many behind him to tackle the Turn,
And the hearts of some riders continue to yearn
For a little more powder to bring on their nags,
To be even with him at the next pair of flags.

[1] The writer has never seen Old Tay Bridge so written, but he can conceive many Scotsmen speaking of him in braid Scots ; also stable-boys calling him ' Old Tay ' for short. F.S.B.

If the novice would know what's a gruelling race,
Let him once get the course in the premier 'chase ;
In the strain of the struggle, when the last mile is reached,
There are plenty who'll know what it is to be beached.

Dissipation of prospects was fated for Sprig,—
He blundered—the signal for Anthony's dig
To bring along gallantly *Auld Tay Brig*.
For the fourth time this horse worked hard for his meed,
And twice at the finish was beaten for speed.
Darracq led to the racecourse, and here shot his bolt
Leaving Doyle and his Bright's Boy no cause for revolt.

Doyle and Anthony meet ; the time now arrives,
And they sit down to ride for the race of their lives.
Side by side at the last fence of all near the corner
' Old Tay ' 's close to Bright's Boy, in front of Jack Horner,
And now with a rush on the flat takes the lead.
But his thighs lack the length of a Robin Hood reed,
And the race is not over,—there breathes at his croup
The American's horse—Jack Horner's come up—
Billy Watkinson let out his light-weight in time,
And he passes ' Old Tay ' with a thrilling sublime
(Sublime for the owner, but not quite in chime
With the backers of others, though every good ' sport '
Loves to see a horse win of the real right sort.)

The last quarter-mile on the flat is the test—
The fences bold hunters can jump at their best,
But the ' lepper ' and stayer and racer combined
Is the one to fly first past the post you will find.

Jack Anthony thought ' with my extra two stone
I can never get up to the post quite alone,
We can just make a race of it, " Old Tay " will try.'
So he digs in the spurs and he lets the whip fly.

The silence was deathless, ere these three horses
Began battling it out on the greatest of courses.
But now comes the tumult—the rousing, the cheering,
With hats off and hats up and plenty careering,
Not a bookie but's shouting his voice-organ hoarse
(An audible sign of his winnings of course)
As the three pass the post ; Old Tay Bridge outrun,
Jack Horner three lengths—JACK HORNER HAS WON.

Bright's Boy a length from ' Old Tay,' and not far
Off behind galloped Sprig ; Darracq fifth—the bright star
Of three parts of the race ; then, close to him wed
Master Billie, Misconduct, Thrown In, Pop Ahead.
There's always much roaring no matter who win,
And the ' Stars and Stripes ' get their share of the din
As the orange and white is led back to weigh in.

Said the owner, C. Schwartz,[1] his face wreathed in smiles,
'I'm the luckiest and proudest of men in these Isles—
The proudest of all in the world I might say—
While I lift the Blue Riband of 'chasing to-day.'

As game as a pebble and loaded with grit,
Billy Watkinson [2] put it in words here writ :—
'There's nothing to say, though this I should tell—
The horse did it all, and the horse did it well :
When I ride this Jack Horner I trust to his will,
And all I've to do's to sit tight and sit still.'
And when asked by a pressman to talk of the fences—
Were they monstrously big, did they puzzle his senses ?—
'Never lower those jumps for *me*—get away !
I should love before breakfast to go round them each day.'
Jerked this prince of good jockeys without any bile
In his own irrepressible Irish style.

[1] Mr. A. C. Schwartz only came into possession of Jack Horner on the 11th March. He purchased him from the Honble. Kenneth Mackay for £4[illegible] as a likely winner of the 'National, and if he won he was to pay other £2[illegible]. The value of the 'National to the owner was £7560. Mr. Schwartz presented his trainer, Harvey Leader, with £1[illegible], and gave a similar sum to the jockey.

[2] William Watkinson was born in Tasmania of Irish parents, and he is a nephew of Charles Hogan, the whilom crack Irish jockey. He is about thirty-five years of age, and served his apprenticeship under the late W. P. Cullen at the Curragh. For twelve years past Watkinson has been attached to the stable of John McGuigan in Ayr, Scotland. On five occasions he has ridden in the 'National, and in 1922 steered Drifter into second place, Music Hall being the winner.

And what says Jack Anthony riding 'Old Tay'? [1]
'I would like to have ridden my fourth win to-day,
But I have no excuse—he just blundered at four
And went perfectly well for the rest of the tour.'

The best of our jockeys [2] were seen in the fray;
Some fell to remount, some remained where they lay.
T. Leader [3] on Sprig, F. B. Rees and Trudgill,
Mr. Dennis (Mount Etna) who met with a spill,
E. Doyle [4] on Bright's Boy, Major Cavenagh and Hamey
Who rode Mr. Barbour's young Koko so gamey,
Major Wilson, F. Brookes,[5] T. Morgan and Stott [5]
Are a few of the others who found the pace hot.[6]
Fourteen lived to finish, and sixteen did not.

* * * * * *

[1] Mr. Dixon's Old Tay Bridge (by Bridge of Earn—Broken Reed, twelve years, was conceding 25 lbs. to Jack Horner, nine years, and in the gruelling finish the poundage made all the difference, though Jack Anthony declared 'the best horse won.' J. R. Anthony, when riding as an amateur, rode three winners of the 'National—Glenside (20-1, 10.3) in 1911, Ally Sloper (100-8, 10.6) in 1915, and Troytown (6-1, 11.9) in 1920.

[2] Two other distinguished amateur riders, Mr. H. A. Brown and Capt. Filmer Sankey, were not riding in this 'National.

[3] Finished fourth. [4] Finished third. [5] Got the course.

[6] The time taken (equal to Sergeant Murphy's in 1923) was 9 mins. 36 secs. as compared with Double Chance's 9 mins. 42⅘ secs. last year.

Possessed of sinew, pluck and iron wills,
Their tests are fences and ' the pace that kills '—
And never jockey yet but had his spills.

The life demanded by the 'chaser's art
(To every tyro fit to break the heart)
Is full of grandeur in the skilled one's part.
His work is hard, his way is rank and rooty ;
His deeds and sacrifice are clad with beauty,
When born of a manly life and sense of duty.
Had ever helmsman of the clipper days
Sailed on more gracefully through the watery ways,
Than some we've known to do through a ' National ' maze—
The maze of thirty horses packed together
In rain or snow or in tempestuous weather,
Their jockeys bravely riding ' hell for leather ' ?

No officer nor trooper in the van
Of cavalry charge is, man for man,
A bolder, better trained equestrian ;
No famous pugilist, no fighting lawyers,
No whipper-in, no huntsman nor top-sawers,
Have stronger nerve than these Grand National warriors.
Look at the obstacles o'er which they race—

Yon walls of green they climb !—at *what* a pace !—
No steeple-jack has greater risks to face
Than have the riders of this steeplechase.

The winner earns his glory ! [1]

30th March, 1926.

[1] Three weeks after William Watkinson had steered 'Jack Horner' a winner of the Grand National, and seventeen days only after I had completed this poem, he met with a fatal accident in a steeplechase at Ayr. Indeed, it has been 'short-lived fame' for him !



HUNTING BALLADS, ETC.

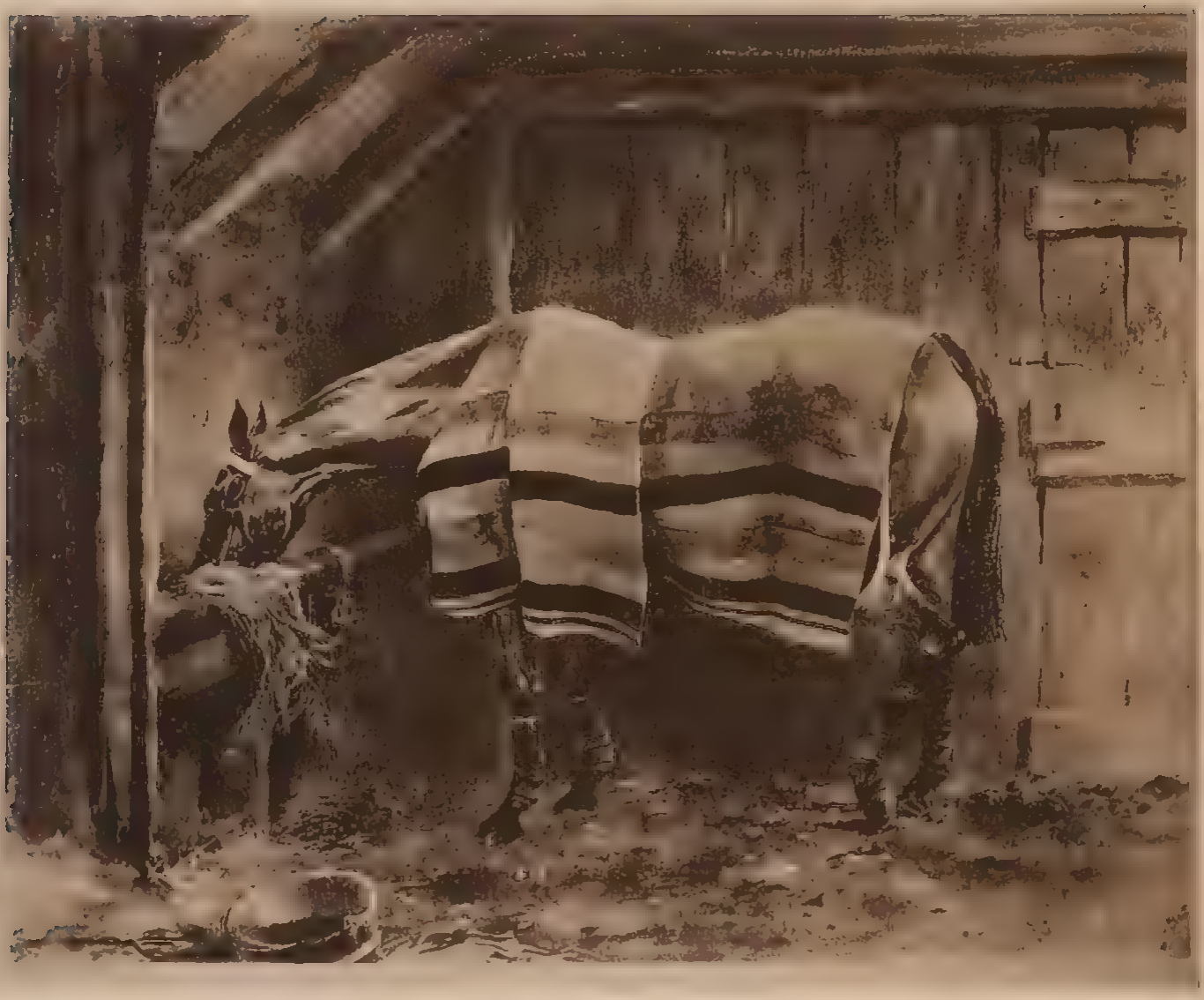


PLATE IV.

The Invalid. *A study of Carrick Hill, an old 'chaser belonging to Moffat S. Thomson, Esq., of Lambden, M.F.H*

Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1920.

THE GAME [illegible]

AS TOLD BY [illegible]

['The Invalid' is the title of a picture which [illegible]
[illegible] be telling [illegible]

I.

I FEEL I could yarn if I wanted to do so—
I could tell you a tale or two,

But brimming with sport—and they're true.

And I'll make is as short as I can:

Jim Harbert [illegible]
And hunting through [illegible]
But he'd never been [illegible] steeplechase course,
Though he knew [illegible]



PLATE IV.

The Invalid. *A study of Carrick Hill, an old 'chaser belonging to Moffat S. Thomson, Esq., of Lambden, M.F.H.*

Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1920.

THE GAME CITY MAN

AS TOLD BY THE INVALID

['The Invalid' is the title of a picture which I painted some years ago. It shows a fine old 'chaser, with rugs on him, picking at the hay he has drawn up into his manger. He is supposed to be telling this tale. The first and seventh stanzas are told direct—the old 'chaser in the box is talking to someone; stanzas two to six inclusive give the tale—the old horse talking of his owner and himself (in the third person.)]

1.

I FEEL I could yarn if I wanted to do so—
I could tell you a tale or two,
Not so good maybe as your *Robinson Crusoe*,
But brimming with sport—and they're true.
I will tell you one if you'd like to hear it,
And I'll make is as short as I can;
It might have been death to myself, or just near it,
And the end of a City man.

2.

Jim Harbord was nothing if not fond of horses,
And hunting the stag he adored;
But he'd never been round any steeplechase courses,
Though he knew how to race with The Ward.

He'd a friend in the Midlands who'd married his sister
And went by the name of Tom Browne,
And that friend said he'd give him a mount with the Bicester
If business would let him come down.
Browne wired he'd box him a horse to the station
Not far off a popular meet ;
Harbord didn't require much more stimulation—
He was soon out of bed on his feet
And into his breeches and boots to dash down
Some coffee and half a beef-steak
And catch the first train to take him to Ashdown,
Not a mile off the tryst by the lake.

3.

'A box by itself, sir, stands in the siding—
Shall I open it for you at once ?'
'Turn him out.' And down came a thoroughbred striding
Fit to carry a welter-weight Muntz !
'But what,' Jim exclaimed, 'in the name of creation
Is this he has sent me to ride ?
He is cut out for sport, but seems out of his station—
Just look at the sheen on his hide !
Pull his rugs off. . . . A surcingle over his saddle !
A tri-coloured band on his brow !
Drawn up !—Tom's hunters weren't made to skedaddle,
They were usually fat as a sow.
Well, I'm out for the day, so I'll top him,

He may be an excellent ' ride '—
Though he *may* take some more than a Harbord to stop him
Should he step in his mettle and pride ! '

4.

Being late for the meet, they jogged on to the covert,
To a spot where a ' whip ' only stood
To mark and to holloa away the Red Rover ;
Up to now the strange horse had been good.
A loud burst of music ! A pull at the bridle,
A sideways shake of the head,
A plunge, a bit of a buck and a sidle !—
Jimmy wished himself back in his bed !
The hounds were so close that they might well have chopp'd her
Before she was pushed from her lair ;
Like a rocket—no power on earth could have stopped her—
She was off with her brush in the air.
Six seconds ; a shrill ' gone away ! ' from the whipper—
A shriek that would waken the dead—
Has roused to the depths our friend's lively clipper,
And he's through like a bullet of lead—
Through an ' oxer ' as high as a cottage and higher—
And instantly gets into stride :
' Moi oyes 'e's a topper—boy goy 'e's a floyer,'
Was it said by a yokel who lied ?
The vixen in view, the beauties are streaming
Across the broad acres of grass ;

Another big fence, and a river comes gleaming
Through which the whole pack has to pass.
To talk to the horse or to clutch him were idle,—
The clipper's seen water before,
And he quickens his pace and tugs hard at the bridle ;
They are over by three foot and more.

5.

Alone with the hounds !—Have these words not some music ?
Do they call up no thrills of the sport ?
Whenever I hear them I turn a bit shoe-sick,—
I am still the same galloping horse.
We will leave them alone with the pack as they rattle
The vixen along up the grass,
Charging fence after fence and with rails doing battle—
Jim Harbord's astride of no ass !
There's no need of spurring and no need of slashing,—
The clipper's tuition was done—
No refusing with *him* and no swerving, but dashing
At all that is there in the run.
He keeps his ears forrard and sticks to the bitches,
So absorbed in their own paradise
That they heed not the blackthorn and stare of the ditches
As they strain for the coveted prize.
Six miles from the tryst they bowl over the quarry,
With Harbord alone by their side.

And when all was over he wasn't so sorry
A stranger was there for his 'ride.'

6.

In the news of the next day he learned that a chaser
Had missed going out with the rest,—
A 'National' favourite—a whilom flat-racer
That had galloped and jumped with the best:
Something went rather queer with the slipping of boxes—
A guard or a porter too slack—
And the racehorse was sent to hunt after foxes,
The hunter to race on a track!

7.

This outing with hounds had tested my staying,
Though it put me a while very wrong—
I was 'off it' for weeks, and I heard the Vet saying
'He'll not be "The Invalid" long!'
But I'm here still, and won the Blue Riband of chasing,
In the name of James Harbord I ran;[1]
And the gamest of all to ride on me *racing*—
Our hero, THE GAME CITY MAN.

November 1925.

[1] The reader must imagine that the 'game city man' became the owner of 'The Invalid' after his glorious day on him with the Bicester Hounds.

FIVE MILES IN EIGHTEEN MINUTES WITH THE WARWICKSHIRE[1]

'The pace set by the Warwickshire beat anything I have ever seen or dreamed of in fox-hunting.'—CRAWFORD WOOD ('Hyme').

'Twas the fastest and wildest of scurries,
O'er a fine line of Warwickshire grass,
Such a one as would drown all your worries
And let the time pleasantly pass.

A FOX from the Debdale covert was halloa'd,
For Broadwell he first made his flight;
But swinging left-handed a fresh course he follow'd
In Leamington Hastings' sight,
Where he plunged in the Leam, near the ford of the river,
Struggled straight up the opposite bank
And sped on, never waiting to shake or to shiver
In sound of the ominous twank.

Once over the water, the fox of our story
Bore gamely away to the right;
And here, we may say—for his honour and glory—
Got very soon out of our sight.
Thenceforth, without actually touching the covert,
Setting mask for Leicester's Piece,

[1] This run took place in November 1912.

Round Hensborough Hill ran the cunning red rover
To beyond ' The Green Lane of Release.' [1]

Away flew the one that could scud over pasture
At the pace of an aeroplane ;
Away raced the hounds, running faster and faster,
The breast-high scent to retain ;
In the vanguard were three—aye, three only leading—
Walter Buckmaster,[2] Holland and Freake ; [3]
While the rest of that Warwickshire ' field ' was receding
For miles in a red and white streak.

Speeding over the grass, he kept handsomely bearing
To right with a big rounded sweep,
And slipped through the ramparts of blackthorn, not fearing
The smart of each perilous leap—
Regardless of spine and regardless of thickness
He laid himself out with a will
To breast each as it came, never slacking his quickness
Till he landed at Bunker's Hill.

Not a mount that was saddled could prove itself able
To be with the hounds on his track—

[1] Thurlaston Green Lane—' The Lovers' Walk.'
[2] Walter Buckmaster, Esq., of polo fame, now (1925) Master of the Warwickshire.
[3] ' Freddy ' Freake, of polo fame, now Sir Frederick C. M. Freake, Bart.

'Twould have taken the wonderful horse of the fable
To live with that fly-away pack !
And each rider would feel that his joy was diminished,
On surviving this mem'rable rush,
To find that the victory had not been finished
With a wave in the air of his brush.

MUNTZ'S ROBIN RED

Who has not heard of Albert Muntz, [1]
The man all Pytchleydom knew once ?

As I write old days come o'er me,
And Robin Red's before me.
There must still be a few who remember the stride of that thoroughbred bay,
Taking all his fences neatly
And gliding on so sweetly
That his rider scarcely seemed to feel him all the way ;
And the rider knew no other
To treat him as a brother
And bear so big a burden through a long and tiring day.

I remember that brave welter
As we galloped helter-skelter
From the famous stronghold known as sure-find Kilworth Sticks,

[1] Sir Albert P. Muntz, Bart., M.P., of Dunsmore, Rugby, who rode eighteen stone, and was the best welter-weight in the Midlands.

When coupled to the Master
We left behind disaster
In the ditches filled with scores of Harrys, Toms and Dicks ;
Yes, I mind me of Sir Albert,
So stately and so stalwart,
When we checked and pulled up sharp beside the Lilbourne ricks.

He turned to me *instanter*
To say his bay could ' canter '
As no horse with the Pytchley had ever done before—
He never knew a racehorse
To make so good a chase-horse
And carry in Northamptonshire his sixteen stone and more.
As the season then was waning,
He put the horse in training ;
But 'twas very soon his face a changed expression wore :

The bay in Beatty's stable
Was found to be unable
To stand the extra ' gruelling ' and—dropt down dead !
Of all the cast-off racers,
Of all the gallant 'chasers
That in our glorious hunting grounds now gayly tread,
There'd not be very many—
I doubt if there'd be any—
To wrest the hunter's palm from Muntz's Robin Red.

11th February, 1921.

GOOD AT GIVING ORDERS; OR, THE DAY'S WORK OF A PEER

He's good at giving orders is Farrington the peer,
As he lounges in his sanctum on a snug ancestral chair.

The stud-groom steps in early and stands to hear his will,
Then shuts the door behind him with orders to fulfil.

His valet too takes orders to clothe the peer in pink,
And hastens to the wardrobe, while the peer puts pen in ink

And scribbles to the parson to dine with him that night,
Then jumps into his leathers, which are made to fit him tight,

As tight below the kneecap as bell-shaped up above;
And Bartley's boots he lugs on—the boots he's learned to love;

And when he's tied his 'kerchief in the smartest hunting knot,
His valet brings his pink coat and a glass of brandy hot.

In a trice he mounts a pony, and digs his heels in her
And hurries off to covert to meet his huntsman there.

And 'Tom' in turn takes orders to draw the Bingley Strips,
As a groom leads up his hunter, on which he nimbly slips

And moves amongst the people who ' ride to hunt ' that day.
He hears his whipper's ' Tally ' and sees a fox away.

When hounds have burst from covert, with the huntsman in their wake,
Each looks the fence well over to find a place to take ;

The peer is first to follow—no one would go in front,
For he's good at giving orders to the Farringtonshire Hunt.

His ' cattle ' know their business and gallop game and strong—
They are good at taking orders though they do not get them long ;

And he himself can sit them at water, rail and wall,
So he's bound to be on four legs, for his mounts they never fall.

He likes a lot of jumping, and loves to give a lead—
He never loved the craven or the currish skirter's creed.

But an hour's good running leaves him content and well disposed,
A happy man for one day, and his hunting then is closed.

A second horseman meets him with a fresh one on the road,
And he springs on him and canters straightway for his abode.

The Castle gates fling open to receive the gallant pair ;
By a groom the steed is taken, and the peer struts up the stair.

A flunkey pulls his boots off, and he himself his ' breeks '
To get inside a lounge-suit, which he only wears for weeks,—

For Farrington's the man for the tailor's artful trade,
And is good at giving orders—though his bills are never paid.

Then he sits him down to poached eggs, and smokes a long cigar
In his sanctum till the evening before a roaring fire.

But he's good at giving orders, and the valet knows the time
When the peer will change for dinner by the ancient hall-clock chime.

And he dines him with the parson, whose tongue's his special forte;
And they toast the King and Hunting till they both need some support
(*They have slipped under the mahogany.*)

But he's good at giving orders is Farrington the peer,
So he tells the prattling parson to put him on his chair.

The parson hiccups, 'No, my lord—(hic) I'm down below myself—
If you want to mount the chair again you must get (hic) up there yourself.'

So the footmen take his long shanks, and the butler takes his head—
And he gives no further orders till he finds himself in bed.

January 1909.



PLATE V

Old Hunters Summering. *Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in* 1923.

Painted for Thomas W. Tod, Esq., of Clerwood, in 192

be negotiated. And then I lazily fell back on a sweet

When I had wings, my brother,
Such wings were always thine :
Such wings my heart remembers

While feet of hounds are patterin
And music lovers the cou
The shoes of dreamland clatter
Make all of me rejoice



PLATE V.

Old Hunters Summering. *Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in* 1923.

Painted for Thomas W. Tod, Esq., of Clerwood, in 1920.

TO THE SHADE OF 'THE SQUIRE'

With apologies to Mr. Swinburne for purloining so much of his 'sea-mew.'

The following lines were written after visiting some fox-hound kennels, where hounds' feet pattering on the wet flags reminded me of a more welcome sound still—the clattering of a thoroughbred hunter's shoes in my own stableyard of years ago. And that sound recalled other sounds, till I began to feel I was in Northamptonshire again, careering over the wide pastures there, with their tall quick-set hedges, stake-and-bounds and forbidding ox-rails to be negotiated. And then I lazily fell back on a sweet song of Swinburne's to help me with the expression of but a small portion of what kept crowding up in my memory.

When I had wings, my brother,
Such wings were always thine :
Such wings my heart remembers
In passing sweet Novembers ;
Than those I would no other—
Ah, Squire, they were not mine,—
When I had wings, my brother,
Such wings were always thine.

The shoes of dreamland clattering
Make all of me rejoice :
Though storm clothe *me* with sorrow,
Great joy from *thee* I borrow ;
While feet of hounds are pattering,
And music drowns the voice,
The shoes of dreamland clattering
Make all of me rejoice.

With swifter stride, and louder
Long hoof-stroke-call of joy,[1]
Thy tribe rebukes the skirter,
Puts terror in the flirter,
But sure as truth, and prouder
Than maids with man for toy ;
With swifter stride, and louder
Long hoof-stroke-call of joy.

The lark knows no such rapture,
Such joy no nightingale,
As sways the drumming measure
Wherein *thy* shoes take pleasure ;
Thy speed no man can capture,
Thy pride no man can quail ;
The lark knows no such rapture,
Such joy no nightingale.

Ah, me ! thy joys were sweeter
Than joys I deemed divine ;—
Thy life at last was tarnished
That once lived whole and garnished,
That matched the fences' metre
And drank the wind's wild wind
With joy more keen and sweeter
Than joys I deemed divine :

[1] This alludes to the volume of sound emitted when fifty or sixty horses come galloping together over hard ground—it drowns the music of the flying pack in front of them.

The quick-set spreads and flutters,
The rail's heart creaks and breaks ;
One moment's passion thrills it,[1]
One pulse of power fulfils it
And ends the pride it utters
When, loud with life that quakes,
The quick-set spreads and flutters,
The rail's heart creaks and breaks !

You, injured, there beside me—
I'll not forget that fall !—
As a log of wood I lay there,
As helpless as the clay there,
And come whate'er betide me
To dreams alone am thrall ;
You, injured, there beside me—
I'll not forget that fall !

My dreams had wings that falter,
My heart bore hopes that die ;
For thee no dream could better
A life no fears may fetter,[2]

[1] We talk of a forbidding rail or bullfinch, as if it were alive with passion and power to resist the strength and weight even of a good bold horse.

[2] An accident to a horse, unless a very bad one indeed, will not generally prevent him from using his 'wings' and galloping on—I have seen a thoroughbred mare cantering across the whole length of a fifty-acre field with half her entrails dragging on the ground, quite unknown to her rider !—whereas a man will knuckle under at once if badly injured, and he is wise to do so. It is not always fear that makes a good hunter gallop on after he has fallen and picked himself up again—he likes the game too well to be left behind.

A pride no care can alter,
That wots not whence or why
My dreams had wings that falter,
My heart bore hopes that die.

We are fallen, even we, whose passion [1]
On earth is nearest thine ;
Who sing, and cease from flying ;
Who live, and can't help sighing :
Grey time, in time's grey fashion
Bids horseless creatures pine :
We are fallen, even we, whose passion
On earth is nearest thine.

Though dreams would make us bolder,
We can but creep and sing,
Or ride through dream's waste hollow
The line we once could follow
Till they grow cold and colder
And we have lost thy wing ;
Though dreams would make us bolder,
We can but creep and sing.

31st December, 1922.

[1] The passion for racing over a country is in a man almost as strong, but not so natural, as it is in a horse.

RED COAT AND GREEN COAT

RED FOR THE FOX

WHETHER red be the coat or green be the coat,
It matters not which—I care not a groat—
If the ' game ' mean to fly to a country remote.

Red be the coat ?—Then this be my prayer :—
Give me the feel of a thoroughbred mare
With pluck for a gallop and speed to spare ;

Bright be the morning, cloudy the noon,
A scent in the covert, a fox from it soon,
Loud be the horn and merry the tune.

* * * * * *

Hounds that are fast, hounds that are true,
Over the grass and through fences a few
Are nursing the line in November dew ;

Merrily onward, merrily on,
Noses near to the ground on the line she has gone,
On without checking, merrily on ;

Heads getting higher, sterns falling low,
Streaming along over pasture and plough—
Hounds of the Pytchley, ye know how to go !

Brought to a check and casting anon,
Catching the scent again, on with their song—
Merrily onward, merrily on.

* * * * * *

Leaping the drains with the ease of a deer,
Charging the blackthorn with strength of a steer—
Hounds of the Pytchley, ye know no fear !

* * * * * *

No rest in the gorse for this vixen to-night ;
On, on past the village, and, twisting to right,
She'd have turned for the brook—but hounds are in sight ;

She's nothing to do but turn and defend—
Nothing to do but wait for the end,
And give up her flesh for the Pytchley to rend.

And her fate is the fate of thousands of others
That have prey'd on the weak and were queens in the coverts—
The gamest of game of our country-bred mothers.

GREEN FOR THE HARE

Green be the coat ?—Then this be my prayer :—
Give me the breath of the Westmorland air,
Show me the speed of a mountain hare ;

Early the hour and bright be the skies ;
Point me the place where the grey hare lies,
One that will fly for six miles ere she dies ;

Bring me the hounds that are cunningly taught,
Such as can stoop on legs that are short,
Hounds that are best of the harrier sort,

Bell-mouth'd and merry and staying withal,
Ready to turn and come to one's call—
These are the hounds I love to recall ;

Neither too short, and neither too tall,
Be the horse which you'd give me that's good at a wall
And can jump it where others would certainly fall,

A hunter that's made with a powerful thigh
To lift him along where the hills are high,
One too to travel with never a sigh.

* * * * * *

On to her, harriers !—puss is away !
Bravely she starts, and well she may—
Is she not in for a dance to-day ?

Ringing to right and ringing to left,
Puzzling the pack till it's all but cleft—
Puss is as crafty as hounds are deft !

Squatted for seconds, they're on her again—
You could cover them all with a counterpane
As they merrily hunt her along the lane.

Into a spinney, on to the grass,
Up through the turnips quickly they pass
And over the fence to the broad morass.

Turning right-handed she leads the way
Down by the Inn where we met to-day,
The spot where the ' cry ' had been brought to stay ;

Over the water, across the moor,
Hastening like Pegasus from a pursuer,
With the ' field ' away back coming fewer and fewer.

But hounds and the huntsman are now in her sight,
And my hunter and I struggle on in the flight
To view her ahead on the breast of the height.

Eagerly onward, eager we fly,
Never so much as to turn an eye—
Eagerly onward, eager we fly.

Ruses and doubles now out of her mind,
With never a hedgerow or shelter to find,
She clings to the moor with the hounds behind.

See her hop to the wall—her last chance is found—
And with one final effort prepare for the bound ;—
She misses her mark and falls to the ground
To drop in the teeth of the foremost hound—
Who-whoop ! Harriers, tear her ! Who-whoop !

26th December, 1919.

THE SWEETMART

[More than forty years ago the writer was lucky enough to join in a hunt after the pine-marten or sweetmart. He was out with the Windermere Harriers that ran and killed one in Far Easedale, a bit above Grasmere, in Westmorland.]

As rare is he as foumart, and sharper than any knife—
A sparkling sure impression of furtive woodland life.

Who can outclimb the squirrel as weasels of the tree,
Who can out-run the roe-deer, are beasts we fain would see.

Bright eyes as bright as jewels, a flaming orange front,
With a bushy tail above him, has the beast we're out to hunt :

So lovely yet unlovable, with pretty head awry
(At heart a little devil), is the brute that wears a lie.

Now posed on sunlit branches, now peering down the crags,
He lures the meek intruder,—then tears him into rags :

Just watch his flashing antics and mark his cruel dive—
Is any earthly creature so wofully alive ?

The mart prefers starvation to nibbling carrion food ;
Unlike the stoat and weasel, he knows that warm blood's good,—

And he sticks at nothing for it—will fight with fox or cat,
And if you're in his country be careful what you're at !

We find him up aloft in a pine inside a fold—
The very spot spells mischief, and a sorry tale is told.

We hiss ; hounds speak ; he sees us, a brain's behind his eye,
Then—rip !—he's off—awa-a-ay !—vowing he will not die.

Scentless to us, the sweetmart leaves scent enough for hound,
As they scour the line all screaming and make each rock resound :

And the one that left behind him a train of bloody death—
Who lived on lamb and chicken—has found his latest breath.

Only the capercailzie of rugged heights and glens
Now knows the lawless creature that once loved cocks and hens :

In words, not woods, we find him—foul crimes insure his fame—
And no regret needs nursing that the sweetmart's but a name.

29th December, 1923.

A BISHOP ON THE BOX

[Inscribed to my father (aet. 80, b. 1833) and sent with a memory sketch of his old coachman,[1] Bishop by name, and the author of this rhyme as a colt, seated on the box of the family waggonette.]

To mind you of a *bishop*,
In times when we were young,
Who took us to an Abbey
To hear the *requiem* sung.

A requiem is a death-song,
A 'who-whoop!' is the same—
And yon's the sort of requiem
For which we sometimes came.

The bishop *was* a Bishop,
And fat though bold was he,
Who loved to see a fox-chase,
And so did you and we.

But your pink coat's *the* best link with
The days you ne'er will rue—
When with the game North Warwickshire
And Firr[2] and all you flew;

[1] The writer possesses still an excellent cabinet photo of that valuable old family servant, taken about the year 1869.

[2] Tom Firr, huntsman 1869-72, afterwards huntsman of the Quorn.

So if you've still that pink coat
Do, pray, just send it here,
That I may mind the old days
When you and I were near—

Close to old Stoneleigh Abbey [1]
To see 'em kill a fox,
You on your horse and I with
A *bishop* on the box.

31st December, 1913.

OLD RAG OF RED

To my Father.[2]

Such a present was sent me this morning,
That I pictured me four years of age,
When the spirit of sport was just dawning—
How I dwelt on that memory's page !
With the days, then, when scarce I could toddle
These 'leathers' I once more may wed,
And accept—for a new sporting model—
Your *Old Rag of Red*.

[1] Lord Leigh's place, where the first meet of the season was always held.

[2] At my request he had sent me the last of his hunting coats and a pair of real buckskin breeches, which when a small child I had loved to dress myself up in.



PLATE VI.

MY FATHER. *The late George Fothergill, Esq., of Binswood, Leamington, and Allan Bank, Grasmere, recalling his Warwickshire days* (1867-73). *Mr. Fothergill was the second son of Richard Fothergill, Esq., of Lowbridge, Westmorland, who was born in* 1789 *and died in* 1851.

[illegible] your figure being measur'd—
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
To [illegible] that you wore
[illegible] your [illegible]

[illegible] forty [illegible]
since I saw you prepared for the chase,
And those years were not *all* rose and clover—
Not a win-as-you-please kind of race,—
Yet I mind e'en the gilt of each button,
While I stood by the side of your bed
And watched every turn as you put on
Your *Old Rag of Red*.

When our lessons were over we'd meet you
[illegible] home on a mud-spatter'd steed,
[illegible] what welcome and gladness we'd [illegible]
[illegible] our faces you'd easily read.
[illegible] the love of old loves ' and young [illegible]
I have long'd, as I often have said,
To [illegible] for myself that red relic—
Your *Old Rag of Red*.

I shall value that ' rag ' and the ' leathers '
For my den where they'll ever remain :
We can see they've been out in all weathers,
And were well drench'd with Warwickshire rain,
And the ' bloom ' on the coat and the breeches
Tell a story of more than one hunt ;
We see too—by some of the stitches !—
You rode in the front ;

For those stains and additional stitches
An acquaintance with hard-riding mean—
And a fairly close knowledge of ditches
Full of mire and water I ween !
To a sportsman this makes them the dearer,
When he knows that you rode in the van :
They all go to show that the wearer
Was once a bold man.

After all, when the flesh has done working,
Tears of bliss may as often fall fast,
As the thoughts in the brain that lie lurking
Are re-loosened on times of the past.
I had relics in plenty to start with
To mind me of living and dead,
But *this* one I *never* can part with—
Your *Old Rag of Red.*

14th January, 1914.

THE THRUSTER : PAIN BEGETS GLORY

'BEGGAR my eyes, what a buster ! '—
The first articulate sounds
Of a man who indulged in a fluster
When riding to hounds.

They gathered around in a cluster
To pick up the pieces thrown ;
One fingered the pulse of the thruster,
Another the roan.

With as much as he'd power to muster
He gathered up nerve to remount—
With a daring, determined ' duster '
Little things don't count !

They are at it again in a minute,
Charging the widest of brooks ;
And he and some others are in it—
' Dusters ' care not for looks.

The next time he's racing at timber—
A nice new five-barred gate—
Rememb'ring it isn't so limber
Till just too late——

A crumpler !—another big buster—
As into the stubble he delves !
About him this time there's no cluster—
They're minding themselves !

When he comes to himself he looks round him,
To find he's alone, of course :
There's no one to soothe or to sound him,—
All he wants is his horse.

On two legs he tackles the stubble,
His ' four legs ' are fading in front—
But a thruster's prepared for some trouble
When he dresses to hunt.

A yokel has caught at the bridle
At the top of a far away lane ;
Neither rider nor horse has been idle,
And they thrust on again.

Here's a bullfinch that's bigger than any,
As black as a whinstone wall,—
And the pains of the chase have been many,
The pleasures but small ;

If he takes it he's covered with glory,—
 Hounds are running from scent to view ;
And now comes the end of the story—
 The thruster is through !

24th August, 1922.

OF WARWICKSHIRE LADS

Over the water into the nettles,
 Up with a buck and a scramble,
Down through the stubble nicely he settles,
 Fronting a fence full of bramble,
Black as yer ' bowler,' six foot in height—
All ye can do's to sit on and sit tight,

And think that you're over, not that you aren't—
 That's how the thruster sort do it.
Lads from old Warwickshire never say can't,
 They're under or over or through it,
Black as yer ' bowler,' six foot in height,
All they will do's to sit on and sit tight.

1920.

A PRESENTIMENT OF EVIL—THE DEATH OF HIS HUNTRESS

And when he got home the clock struck nine.
He was done, like his jaded steed, but he fain
Would stand in the stable and drink no wine
Till his good grey mare was herself again.
No pipe to his mouth, no cup to his lip
Could he raise, till he saw the old huntress dip
The smallest of muzzles deep down in a bucket
Of warm meal and water and greedily suck it
Right off to the dregs.

Not an inch would he stir till he'd seen her brushed down,
And poured in her manger a steaming mash,
And those weary legs of hers bandaged round,
And two sheets on her back ; then he'd off like a flash
And fill from a tin of his favourite *Cotton*
A meerschaum of peace, so that soon were forgotten
The crushes and bruises and checks and delays—
The aches and the pains—of the longest of days
In a perfect oblivion.

While entranced with tobacco, in a grandfather chair,
The best of the fun was before him again,
And the varied scenes of the day, as it were,
Seemed each to be thrown by a perfect train
Of thought on a lantern sheet right across
His eyes—from the fly-away start and the toss
Of the head of his game grey mare, when he gave
Her the office to bore through an ' oxer ' (to save
All the crush at the gate) to the kill in The Cave,
Many miles from his home.

And when he had dreamed for an hour, he dined ;
And he dined all alone that night. But somehow
The dishes they set before him inclined
To upset him, and he said to himself, ' It's rum how
This port, too, of excellent vintage should so
Disagree with me, but '—and he jumped to his feet—
' Good heavens ! Good God ! I know, I know
What it is (and the reason's not far to seek)—
I've killed that mare, my best friend—what I speak
Is the truth—I know it, I know it—'tis done—
And why ?—so that *I* should see *all* of the fun,
And on *one* horse—not two.[1]

[1] Only on rare occasions have I experienced the luxury of having a second horse out to divide the work.

He strode out into the dark and the damp,
And straight to the saddle-room went for a lamp,
He unlocked the door of her box, and there—
Yes, there lay the lifeless form of his mare ! . . .
The tale is an old one to tell you again—
Over-ridden, ruptured vessel, released from pain.
His mind was too full to dwell on the scene,
He turned him to go, feeling meaner than mean ;
And there rung in his mind these lines as the light
He put out and alone stepped into the night :—

Be as true as yon old grey mare—
So true from beginning to end
Of her long and unblemished career—
So thou'lt never be false to a friend.

8th February, 1910.



THE MASTER OF THE HORSE

To the Roughriders of the Remount Service.

As the glory of horses is he that has made 'em,
Though they *have* had to suffer and *have* had to rough it;
So the horses he's made are the crown of the breaker
Who has tumbled for love just as much as for profit.

Horses, like men, need a fair bit o' schooling.
Three things are certain whatever they say,
Courage and kindness and patience you *must* have—
Breaking a horse is not done in a day.
No matter what is his age or his temper,
One method only for all in the main—
Not *one* way with *one* horse and one with another—
Seek to get near the animal's brain.

Instead of applying the whip and the rowel,
Feel him as firmly with finger and knee,
Speak to him coolly, coax him as kindly—
Or maybe you'll fly on the first bit o' lea!
If *you* would master him, please, just remember
To first teach yourself how to work and obey—
Are the lazy and insolent best in the saddle
When effort and duty ne'er come in their way?

See to the grazing, the stabling and feeding ;
Consider the sort of condition they're in—
You like some comfort and good food to work on,
Then *never work horses when poor and thin.*
Know your horse first of all well in the stable,
Then lead him out gingerly into the yard,
Straight on to grass that is short and elastic—
Never to start with on roads that are hard.

Take him in pasture and take him in stubble,
Lead him to water, yourself going before
To cross a small brook and tempt him with honey,
Concealing the lash—or there's sure to be war.
Next comes the saddling, the mounting and starting
With maybe excitement for you and for all—
The jibbing and rearing and backing and plunging—
And never you mind if it ends in a fall.

Send him along at the bar to begin with,
Raising it higher as he lifts up his legs,
Let him feel what he knees is the toughest of timber—
Furze by itself's no better than eggs.
Jog him to meets where he'll be with his brothers
To mix with some colour and hear the odd sounds ;
The moment he dances don't turn his head homewards—
But, by Jove ! *keep his heels off the huntsman and hounds.*

Lend the young stranger the reins for a moment—
Play with his nature—and see what he'll do ;
Sure, if you bear on him, jag him and saw him
There *may* be a wide gap atween him and you !
If *he* gets a hold as you're going to covert,
And *you* are not feeling as fit as you should,
Give him three turns round a plough with its furrow—
It might tend to flatten his fidgety mood !

Some are for thrashing and running 'em done,
Those that have taken to bolt or to kick ;
Others, with galvayne, would humour their hearing :
Many a good 'un is spoiled with the stick.
When he's done right he should know you commend him,
Make him uncomf'table if not, of course ;
But you *must* let him see you've a right to be master,
So *break in yourself—then break in the horse.*

1914.

THE MOUNT TO THE MOUNTED

Sometimes we're spurr'd across the shoulder-point,
Sometimes about the arm—
And that's the surest spot to jag us in
To do the temper harm.
Oh ! flex your knees and keep your two heels down,
And give your mount more rein ;
And when you spur, spur just *behind* the girth,
And never mind the pain—
The pain in our tough hide's no worse than prick
Of pin,—and we must know
That resolution rides upon our backs,
And that we've got to go.

20th November, 1919.

TO HUNTING FARMERS

To the memory of Willie Gray of Braehead Mains, Midlothian, who on one horse won two races on the same day at Oatridge—what has never been done there before or since.

'*All praise to the farmer that lends us the land.*'

Sport is not doomed with such fellows as yonder,
Mounted on 'cattle' with courage and pace,
Turning from nothing to rest or to ponder,
Flanking the hounds as they fly in the race.

Theirs is the sort that no one disgraces,
Hardy and staying and handy withal,
Clever at 'lepping' all kinds of places—
Wattle and timber and water and all.

Those are the men who know how to do it;
They in themselves never take any harm—
Men that can fork all the day (if you knew it)
Loading the wains on a Lothian farm.

Quick with the eye and quick in decision,
Steady of limb and as subtle in joint—
Those are the men of the first division,
Equal to any on every point.

How do they do it? They're out on the 'leather'
Scouring all over the country alone,
Breasting the air in all sorts of weather
Seeing that everything's well with their own;

Out in the saddle on young 'uns and old 'uns,
Summer and winter from sunrise till late,
Making 'em strong 'uns and making 'em bold 'uns
Fit to pop over a five-barred gate.

Witness 'em sailing along in the stubble,
With heads that are perfect and well balanced seat;
Those have been theirs from a child without trouble,—
To see 'em sail by me I say is a treat.

Thanks to the farmer that leads the 'field' striding
Over his grass at a pace that is grand,
Thanks to him here for a lesson in riding,—
Here's luck to '*the farmer that lends us the land*'!

15th November, 1913.

FOLLOW THE FIRTHS[1]

TALLY-HO forrard !—he's made for the earths,
There goes the huntsman and there go the Firths.
It's first flight or no flight with all of us now,—
The country's a sticker and all of it plough ;
Kick him along and follow the Firths !

Harden your hearts and tighten your girths,
Send him along and stick to the Firths ;
Heed not his head up, with ears in your face,
Give him the rein when *they* make the pace ;
Kick him along and follow the Firths !

[1] A well-known hard-riding family in Leicestershire.

FRAGMENT OF A HUNTING RHYME

[Lines run off after renewing acquaintance with a famous stronghold for foxes near Linlithgow, nineteen years after I had hunted with the L. and S.]

HEARKEN, horsemen! Reynard's found!
Echoing still's that welcome sound—
Maiden's[1] 'gone away!'
Mark the beauties as they fly,
Cheered by Cotesworth's[2] lively cry—
He knows how to wake a hound
On a hunting day!

•

See them wildly burst from covert,
Leap the low wall well and over
The ditch that's deep and wide,
Clinging close together knowing
Blood 's in store for them all glowing
With the thought of yon red rover
Running down the 'ride.'

[1] Harry Maiden, 2nd Whip (sometimes 1st Whip) to the L. and S. (1892-93), afterwards 1st Whip to the Belvoir, and then huntsman to Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn's Hounds. He was a grandson of the 'Joe Maiden' of the old Tarporley Hunt days.

[2] Ned Cotesworth, huntsman, then 1st Whip, and then huntsman again of the L. and S. He went to the U.S.A. as kennel huntsman and died there.

Down they settle in the saddle,
All glued tight to what they straddle.
Men and womankind :
Steed on steed-track where he's gone—
See them gallop, dashing on
Helter-skelter !—ho, skedaddle !—
Racing with the wind.

Down the narrow ' ride ' they thunder,
Not a horse is seen to flounder
In the holding ground,—
Each one knows his rider's daring,
While he keeps an even bearing
On the bit to check a blunder
In the hurried bound.

29th June, 1911.

'GEORGE HAS LEFT US'

[These four words are the entry for 21st January, 1835, in the pocket-diary of a Scottish M.F.H. after the departure of his only son and 'right-hand man.']

George has left us,
And bereft us
 Of a part of life!
Evenings merry,
Crowned with sherry,
 Seemed once so in Fife.
Hunting over,
All is clover
 For the horse at grass:
Not for me now,
Now that he now
 Never fills my glass.

There's his pony,
'Patrimony,'
 Roughed off, mateless now:
Getting older,
Bruised his shoulder,
 Useless as a cow.
When astride him
He could ride him,
 None surpassed the pair;

Brains about him,
Nerve throughout him,
 He could make us stare !
In my stable
I may label
 Hunters three or four ;—
Shall I guide them—
Can I ride them,
 Ride them as before ?

Parting trouble
Knows no double
 In this world of care ;
Nerves are shaken,
Heart is taken
 From the ' do and dare ' :
Winds seem bleaker
Knees much weaker,
 With the crushing stroke ;
Natures alter,
Zeal will falter—
 When the heart is broke.

4th February, 1923.

OLD AGE AT THE COVERT-SIDE[1]

We once believed in the flying leap,
 We loved the galloping on,
We loved the look of the glittering pink
 And the horses we rode upon.
We were wise, we were, to love it all—
 We were wise in loving the chase,
When young and rich to revel in what
 A sportsman has to face.

But comes a time when the leap's too high
 And the galloping on too rough,
And the pink's put by and the horse put down,
 And we've followed the hounds enough.
The cry 'gone away!' falls sweet on our ears,
 Recalling departed joys;
We linger long by the covert-side,
 But our hearts are in front with the boys.

15th March, 1920.

[1] As some would know, I did *not* incorporate my own personality into this creation. Up to the time of writing I rode like the devil at anything and on anything whenever an opportunity arose. I had, too, only just left the cavalry at Aldershot, where I rode hard with the Drag and the Beagles (at a time when they hunted the *fox*!).

RESIGNING THE PINK

Aye, lang I've followed here my fond desire—
Lang, lang I've luv'd tod-huntin',
An' luv'd to ride the horse 'at I admeir,
An' sport wi' naethin' dauntin'.

Hoo aften ha'e I donn'd the pink an' white,
An' seen us gayly meetin';
Hoo aften ha'e I seen the pleasin' sicht
O' the L. an' S. hunds fleetin'.

I've joinèd i' the harum-scarum ride—
The up-an'-doon-wind scramble—
An' hursl'd through the fences weel astride
Aboon the gruppin' bramble.

Yon Maiden's crack o' whup an' Ned's clear ca's,
The long straight rins an' doubles,
The swing-gatts an' the hefty whunstane wa's
('At mebbe brought us troubles)—

I mind 'em a', an' the whusslin' burns i' spate,
The deep an' divilish ditches,—

An' whiles a fa'—tae stang my happy state
Ahint the tunefu' bitches.

When harkin' back I'm fu' o' nae remorse,—
My youth was gi'en for courtin'
The plizzurs o' the chase, o' hund an' horse,
An' a' the lave 'at's sportin'.

Noo, age an' I the pink resign to youth—
The link maun shortly sever ;
But while I've life an' mem'ry left, forsooth
I'll hunt i' thocht for ever.

October 1911.

SIR ALFRED PEASE'S RESIGNATION OF THE PINK [1]

So with thankfulness for all the joy and friendship given,
And the years of health and zest for life
Fox-hunting here had brought him, Pease now resigns :
He puts the ' once familiar togs ' into the cupboard,
Where sooner or later all must go, ere he departs
For the happier hunting grounds for which, all through his days,
He has so nobly striven.

[1] On the 8th December, 1920, Sir Alfred Pease, Bart., wrote : ' For fifty-five or fifty-six years my own idea of hunting was to be as near hounds as I could get (legitimately) either on foot, on ponies, or on horses—I cannot hunt as a looker-on."

THE SMALLEST MAN, BUT THE GREATEST MASTER OF HOUNDS

THERE lives close to Leicester, at Skeffington Hall,
A wee little man that'll never grow tall ;[1]
What he knows not of hunting was never worth knowing ;
He is often in front, and he always keeps going.

The most popular Master that ever has been,
The smallest in pink we ever have seen ;
He reigned o'er a country renowned for its grass,
And kennell'd a pack that no others could pass.

This Tailby, wee Tailby, a barrister taught,
Who came to the Shires, to show us good sport :
He thought he could do it, he said he would try ;
That he did it no Leicestershire man will deny.

He is always seen sober, was never a smoker,
Has a nerve like steel and the will of a stoker ;

[1] Mr. W. W. Tailby stood 4 ft. 11 ins. in his socks, but had a long leg in proportion to his very short body, and rode long in the stirrup. I met him on several occasions when hunting with the Pytchley and Mr. Fernie's, and once stayed for several days with him and Mrs. Tailby at Skeffington Hall, in order to do a portrait of him for *Vanity Fair*, in 1898 or 1899. The head and shoulders of my cartoon was published as a frontispiece to *Annals of the Billesdon Hunt* (Mr. Fernie's), 1858-1913 (Chapman and Hall).

He may break every bone that a setter can mend,
But this'll not stop him—he'll ride to the end !

Here's health to that Master !—a master of Masters—
Who tackled the country and faced all disasters ;
Good judge of a hound, good judge of a horse,
Good judge of a man, and—hunting of course.

Circa 1899.

'LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE'

By invitation I mounted 'The Drum' and held him strong in the stubble,
Till the pulling brute made my fingers numb,—but I managed to burst the bubble—
The cheating scheme to down me a peg on an underbred runaway divil
That had thrown his owner and lamed his leg and never yet learned to be civil.
Cried Sharp, 'You can send him at this if you choose—a tidy big place as you see.'
He tried to refuse, and did refuse, but never again with *me* ;
I kneed him tight and I rode him hard at the blindest part of the fence,
And showed how and henceforward a fool could be ruled by a rider's sense.

I can feel the tug on my fingers yet—he feels it more on his jaws ;
In a hundred years we shall both forget the bit and the injured paws.

* * * * * *

Now a moral by this :—leave an old 'sport' alone—let him that is sleeping lie,
Or he'll spring to his feet bringing you and your own down *two* or more pegs by and by.

20th July, 1912.

BACK TO HILLMORTON

Send me to live in sporting Hillmorton,
And give me a runaway horse !—
Was it not there long ago that I bought one—
To ride with the thrusters, of course ?
Was it not there that I fought one ?

Back to the mood that's harum-scarum !
Back to the snaffle and rein
And to the galloping cattle that wear 'em,
Back to them handsome and plain
And to the blackthorns that tear 'em !

Have I not known what it is to ride 'em ?—
Have I not ridden from birth ?—
Have I not known how to humour and chide 'em ?—
All I once lived for on earth
Was to be strong and astride 'em.

30th December, 1913.

BUCKING SALLY[1]

To Bt.-Colonel P. J. V. Kelly, C.M.G., D.S.O., 3rd (King's Own) Hussars (Temp. Brig.-General in Palestine).

I SAT on the back of a good-looking bay,
So perfect in mouth and so moral,—
I *thought* so at least till the end of the day,
When I'd ample excuse for a quarrel.

Not a horse of a hundred I knew in the place
That had carried me over the Valley
Had ever quite thrown me in school or in chase
Save this one, the bad bucking Sally.

(Pig-jumping is common in barracks and school,
But bucking—bad bucking, uncommon) ;
And scarce had she offered to make me a fool
When I knew I was leaving a rum 'un :

I had had my fun on the star of your stud,
And we'd just about come to the Valley—
A plunge, a buck, another, then—thud !
And I said good-bye to your Sally.

1919.

[1] 'Any steed that can loosen his rider's back teeth is said to be a real good bucker.' 'Sally,' an imported broncho, was one of this order, and no mistake—oh, the 'hurricane deck' of that mare! All went the same way off her—each met his 'Waterloo.' Even the best rough-riding sergeant-major at Aldershot was shot off her and laid up for a week afterwards.

A LINLITHGOW FOX

(Reminiscent of a kill at Barnton in the 'thirties.)

The wind is playing through the thorn—
'Tis but a sigh—
And with a whiff of woodland wine
There come sweet sounds of hunting-horn :
And now they know they're on the line
Just taken by
The biggest villain ever born !—

A noted old Linlithgow fox
Of Avonside,
' Assassin, glutton of the night '—
A chicken-thief, worrier of flocks—
Coward that shrinks an open fight,
That will not bide
But seeks his fortress in the rocks.

Ere Ringwood dashes o'er the drive
With vengeful cry,
They rein aside to give him room ;
The angry hounds are all alive
To a burning scent—a sure foredoom
That he shall die
Before the small hand reaches five.

* * * * * *

You can run up new rails for the fences,
But you never can make new men.

The wire is the worst thing to spill 'em,
E'en the boldest of horses, and then——
You may breed 'em as fast as you kill 'em,
But you never can make new men.

TO MY HUNTER FILLY

I've watched you high on the sky-line,
I have been at your side by the brook,
I have followed the ease of your paces
And admired your thoroughbred look :
Your sire was the sire of Ardpatrick—
No gallanter horse for the race ;
Your dam was the cleverest at polo—
A treasure with plenty of pace.

You will be with me only a season,
Ere you leave for an English shire ;
I shall love you and hate you and love you
As I give you the school you require,—
Your mettle I know'll be a trazer—
You've the blood of an Irish line ;
But when once you have yielded you'll go as
A bottle of old red wine.

PRIDE OF PLACE

[Lines inscribed beneath a print of a meet of the Pytchley Hunt.]

'Twas Isaac and the Pytchley Hunt—
The crew that knew the quickest way
To fly from field to field
A record race—
That in the past had made me say,
To no one will I yield
My pride of place.

John Isaac and the Pytchley Hunt
Were 'thrusters' in my younger day,
Who galloped with a will
And knew no fear :—
I seem to hear them laughing say,
No sport without a spill,
Without a tear.

John Isaac and the Pytchley Hunt
Of days gone by in memory live
To keep me in my place—
A 'thruster' still.
To each who sees this print I give
My word the Pytchley pace
Could cure or kill !

11th July, 1912.

THE PYTCHLEY 'WHITE COLLARS'

To Harry Cumberland Bentley, Esq., *of Nithsdale, Market Harborough, sportsman and poet.*

Dear Bentley,—Thank you for your kind note and the splendid photo of yourself. Whenever I hear from a member of your Hunt—and this, nowadays, is a rare thing—I seem to be filled with emotion, and drop into dreamland for a short while—

I imagine myself riding gayly in front
With a score of the gamest 'White Collars,'
And I pillow my head on the charms of a hunt—
That should quicken the sharpest and sharpen the blunt—
In the hearing of hounds and loud holloas.

Soon their echoes depart—I have finished my ride:
Such sweets only come in a dream—
Only come with a turn of a magical tide—
And I wake from my dream with a thorn in my side,—
Things are *not* always just as they seem!

Ever yours truly,
George A. Fothergill.

6th July, 1912.[1]

[1] Exactly a month before I wrote this letter I was in the middle of a week's visit to Mellerstain, staying with the late Brig.-General Lord Binning and Lady Binning, and Lord Binning, himself a hard man to hounds and winner of Point-to-points and steeplechases, told me he looked upon Harry Bentley as one of the six best to hounds he ever knew. Bentley published six small volumes of his verse, and contributed rhymes to *Baily's Magazine*.

OUR HUNTING COUNTRY

To a friend in the North.

Our country's wide and long,
Big woods are on its borders,
And all the centre open
To make the running fast.
There's a ditch to every fence
And much timber in this country,
Three parts of which are pasture,
The other quarter plough.
Barbed wire is on the wane,
There's some about the villages
But red-flagg'd in the season,
And much is taken down.
The pack can hunt and kill ;
Some seventy in the kennel ;
Each hound is deemed a flier,
No hound but has a nose.
Foxes are plentiful,
Quick things the usual order,
Slow hunting very seldom—
Scent's usually too good.
The horse must be well bred,
With strength behind the saddle,
Long thighs and powerful gaskins,

Great hocks and broad flat bone.
The Master's very keen ;
 The men are all good fellows
 And gallop on like centaurs,
Their wives and children too ;
The huntsman sticks at nothing—
 You should see him with his bitches !
 The first-whip is a nailer,
 The second will be—some day ;
And the farmers love the sport.

1897.

HOME FROM HUNTING—HINTS TO YOUNG STABLEMEN

Lead him in carefully on to his bed,
Slacken his girths and unbridle his head ;
Bring him some water but not too much,
Give him a handful of hay to touch.
Get him to stale by shaking some straw
Under his belly from hind to fore,
And whistle and wait, whistle and wait—
Tired though you be and it's ever so late.
Slap both hands with your weight on his back
Where the saddle was seated—smack, smack, smack !
Rub him quite dry with a little loose straw,—

And while you are doing it shut the door ;
And if he breaks out again rub, rub him more,—
Horses badly conditioned or suffering pain
Will sometimes dry off and break out again.
Rub him against the hair of his coat,
Drying to tune of a hissing note ;
See that your will and your weight's in the friction,
And never you smile at an old hand's diction.
Look to his ears and belly and flanks,
Pass your hand up and down all his four shanks ;
Put on his blankets and bandage his legs,
Leaving him warm as a sitting of eggs.
Mix him a mash and give it him cool,
Follow it up with a manger full :
Crushed oats with hay-chaff in stable must tell,
Horses will eat their corn slowly and well.

10th April, 1922.

A DASTARD

Dreamladen I rose from my bed,
Dreamladen I put on my coat,
Dreamladen—with fancies not fled—
I crossed the old bridge of the moat.

And here in the park must I wander
To brush away thoughts that are red,

And tread and tread on till I squander
The thought that she really is dead ?

I never will rest in the thought
That the deeds of the dream only seem—
Is my conscience so easily bought ?—
They *are* what they were in my dream !—

I know it—I feel it,—and his
Is the murderer's cowardly hand ;
And if it be so, sure then this
Is the third he has shot on my land ! . . .

He's a dastard that shoots at a vixen
When there're hounds that would eat her instead :—
We'll give it young gamekeeper Nixon,
That he'll wish it were *he* that is dead !

11th January, 1916.

A BRUISER'S PARADISE

A STIRRING twenty minutes in the vanguard of a clinking run
Is better far than all the laggard's pleasure of a season's fun.

24th November, 1920.

HUNTING MANNERS

How we hate the fellows riding in our pocket,
Or taking buttons off our breeches !
We must leave them and their manners like a rocket
To take possession of the ditches !

7th August, 1922.

THE KEY

THERE's a key to every horse's mouth,
If *you* can only find it ;
And if you can't *he* may look out
For better brains behind it—
(*He may kick you off, and become another's at the first auction.*)

A 'WANT' HERE !

HAVE you ever seen a fellow dressed up
On the back of a wretched 'screw,'
With bones astare from poll to croup
Only fit for the kennel's stew ?

Has that fellow ever caught sight of you,
The eyes of both of you met ?
If they did, did you think his brain rung true—
Or sung out it had 'Lodgings to Let' ?

12th March, 1924.

OF *DIR-RTY* MACKNIGHT'S 'ROSINANTE' GOING TO THE L. & S. KENNELS

Some say they saw the carcase of the horse,
From which his thrift had stripped the skin
(He would not give the huntsman this, of course,
If he could turn it into 'tin'!)

September 1924.

AN EDINBURGH LAWYER'S *BRIEF*

Given coming home from hunting, to an advocate who carried more scent than the fox. The wind was coming sideways.

'You may ride in the front of me, Mister Macknight,
You may ride behind me, Mister Macknight,
But I'm damned if you'll ride by my side'—
And Mister Macknight never tried!—
(*He knew he'd be killed if he did.*)

OF A FOX'S FUR FROM THE HIGHLANDS

I used to like to see it best
Zig-zagging 'mongst the boulders,
And not, no matter who caress'd,
Around a woman's shoulders.

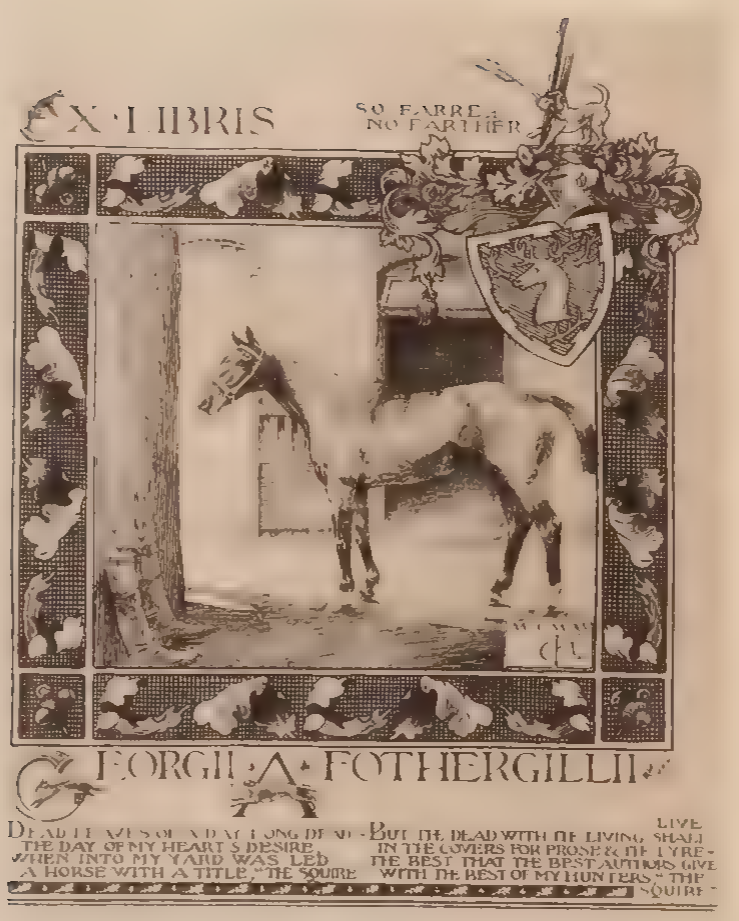


PLATE VII.

My Bookplate. *The original, more than twenty times larger than this print, was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in* 1915.

But now that hunting's ceased for me,
And boulders changed for boxes,[1]
I'll *try* to like that skin round them
To mind me of the foxes.

27th March, 1925.

THE SHORT KENNEL-CROP

You say it's like *an ancient candle*?—
When furnished with a thong
A kennel-crop without a handle
Don't look so very wrong.

And better this by far, young Leaper,
When hacking on your mare,
Than a useless, foolish, empty keeper
That is flapping in the air.

17th September, 1924.

VERSES FOR MY OWN BOOK-PLATE

Dead leaves of a day long dead!—
The day of my heart's desire,

[1] I keep my paints in a box, sit on a box, keep many of my belongings in boxes (because I've no better furniture for them), and often keep fumbling in and tumbling over boxes in the dark in my studio. But I still hate the idea of [illegible] being killed in any way but by hounds.



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[1] I keep my paints in a box, sit on a box, keep many of my belongings in boxes (because I've no better furniture for them), and often keep fumbling in and tumbling over boxes in the dark in my studio. But I still hate the idea of a fox being killed in any way but by hounds.

When into my yard was led
A horse with a title 'The Squire.'

But the dead with the living shall live
In the covers for prose and the lyre—
The best that the best authors give
With the best of my hunters, 'The Squire.'

1915.

'NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE'—THE TALE HAS ALREADY BEEN TOLD

['Very few of our great masters of hounds have left anything save a cherished memory behind them. What was lost when men like the late Duke of Beaufort or Lord Henry Bentinck died, without a syllable of printed record of their own work, will never now be known.'—Sir THEODORE A. COOK, in the *New York Times Book Review*, 14th February, 1926.]

AND may every man keep as silent. Great heaven!
We've authors and talkers enough
Who are bursting with all sorts of time-worn stuff
From the Land o' Cakes to old Devon!

There are those who mimic the muse of a monkey,
And without the least bittock of shame;
But all they do for our grand old game
'S to talk the hind leg off a donkey!

5th March, 1926.

DEATH OF MY OLD GREY MARE

Be as true as my old grey mare—
So true from beginning to end
Of her long and unblemished career—
So thou'lt never be false to a friend.

May thy thoughts be as clean as her coat,
May thy manners be gentle and kind,
As were hers in the stable and field,
So thou'lt never an enemy find.

1909.

PARLEY BETWEEN AN IMPUDENT SCHOOL-BOY AND MYSELF

As I rode to a meet of the hounds one frosty morning.

'Here, stop that infernal-like sliddering
By my side as I ride!'

'I will weigh what you say—
I will give it a little considering.'

'You think what I say is a trifle—
Stop, you fool, get to school!—

Damn the clown! she is down—
And put out her thigh at the stifle!'

TO CURE THE IGNOBLE

THE thing to do with the ignoble few
Who swagger in the 'lists,'
Is to make 'em yield in the hunting field,
Or knock 'em out with the fists.

1919.

AT SEA IN SOUND OF THE GUNS[1]

O, SING not to me of the pleasures of home—
Let hounds and their hunting go by;
Give *me* the rough ocean with bosom of foam
And a cruiser in chase that will fly!

There's melody sweet in the music of hounds,—
But sweeter to me is the sound of the guns;
There's happiness felt on a horse as he bounds,—
But there's rapture indeed when the enemy runs!

March 1917.

[1] These lines were inspired by a letter (dated 18th March, 1917) which I received from my old friend Beatty, the great Admiral, in which he said—'Yes, indeed I look forward to the day when I can once again get on the back of a good horse and have a ride behind a streaming pack. There is nothing like it to make one forget the night-*mares* of our present existence, except streaming after the enemy in a Blue Sea on a fine day with our Cruisers hot after him.' He wrote this from his ship at sea, either just before or after action.

OF JOHN PEEL

Broad was his forehead and curly his hair,
In ringlets it fell down his neck ;
Blue were the eyes set back in his head,
Blue *still* when his life was a wreck.

Keen was the dart of those bright blue eyes,
And loud was the blast of his horn,
Made for a sportsman bred to the chase,[1]
And only for that he was born.

5th December, 1915.

JOHN PEEL'S HORN

D'ye ken yon copper and brass-ring'd horn,
Wrought for the lips of a Cumberland Peel
Just before Waterloo buglers were born,
Far away back in an age of steel ?

Yes, I ken Peel's horn as it hung on high,
Broken and mended and dinted and worn ;
An' I ken t' old body who heaved a sigh
When she told me yon was her Daddy's horn :

[1] It was said of him that 'he seemed to have come into the world only to send foxes out of it.'

Old Mistress Calvert (the name she bore)
Was living on charity, widow'd an' all,
Close to the kennel, close to his door,[1]
When I found the horn on her cottage wall.

Long had it hung there, long unblown,—
It is years since he rode to the Land o' the leal.
Where is it now *she's* gone ?—unknown ? [2]
Oh, where is the horn of our old John Peel ?

22*nd May*, 1911.

[1] At Ruthwaite, not far from Caldbeck and Ireby. In the spring of 1896 I made a special visit to the John Peel country and gathered a number of fresh facts concerning the 'mighty hunter' for 'The History of John Peel,' published in Pt. III. of my *Sketch-book* (1903). With old Mrs. Calvert's permission I took down the curved horn from its place on the wall, gave one or two loud blasts on it, feeling the while that I was lip to lip with the dearest object of the immortal Cumbrian's affection, and then sat down at the cottage table to sketch it. In a sense I look upon this as the greatest honour ever bestowed upon me ;—and the bestower, a poor old body actually in receipt of five shillings a week from the parish! This, with a cup of tea and a patch of her father's old grey coat, was all she could offer me on that occasion; but wasn't that a *very great deal* ?—a memory to stay with one to the end of one's days ?

I have had the intense pleasure of handling the horns of Billy Bean (see 'The Druid's' works), Jack Stevens (Squire Osbaldeston's huntsman to the Pytchley), Tom Firr of the North Warwickshire and Quorn, and other famous masters and huntsmen; but John Peel's, about which there floats so world-wide a glamour—for is not the song known to every man, woman and child in Christendom, and even amongst the coloured races ?—I am forced to consider the supremest hunting relic of all, and many others, I am glad to find, think the same about it.

[2] In a book recently published by Heath Cranton Limited, entitled *John Peel*, the author tells us it is now to be seen at the Sun Inn, Ireby, Cumberland.

WEATHER SECRETS

The weather is well in turn for everyone.

The Farmer he wants it wet,
The Publican wants it dry ;
So what is the weather to be ?
A prophet will wander you bet,
The glass[1] may give 'em the lie ;
But the weather says, ' Wait and see.'

26th June, 1925.

POOR DICK ![2]

Poor Dick ! he's down in the dumps and a-weeping :—
She'd have him apply to the Meynell—
She'd see him in breeches and clogs and a-sweeping
The dung of a dog in his kennel !

Poor Dick ?—lucky Dick !—better there than in trenches
With Boches and brute Huns to hound him,
'Midst slush and inevitable everyday stenches
And rotting of humans all round him.

[1] The barometer.

[2] Lord Derby advocates the keeping up of foxhounds. But if a man a bit over service age turns up his nose at the thought of assisting a kennel-huntsman, he should, especially when labour at home is so hard to get, be made to sweep out the trenches. That is my opinion. The wives have sometimes more pluck than the husbands.

Poor Dick ! Let him go to the hounds of the Meynell ;
And then if his nose be too dainty,
Send him bundling through France from the Derbyshire kennel
To besom out trenches in plenty !

27th March, 1916.

A BLOOD AND THUNDER BARGAIN[1]

[A devil of a horse had run away with one of the whips of a Leicestershire Pack and killed him. The horse, being in most other respects a very good hunter, was sent by the Master (now deceased) to a certain dealer to be disposed of. An old friend of mine found out the horse, after looking over about forty in the dealer's yard which were not up to his weight or to his fancy, and bought him. The dealer was very honest about the horse whom he knew, but for this, the worst of all vices, and kicking, was well worth 300 guineas to anyone who could hold him and keep him out of a crowd.]

'E's thar jist as 'e cam'd to us—
'E's nivver been bruish'd darn ;
We durstna gi' 'im a feed o' oa-äts—
'E'd bring t' partition darn.

'E's waitin' thar at foive-an'-twenty pund—
Noa lamb soa moild an' meek !
We ca's 'im ' Bluid an' Thunder '—'cos
'E killed a ' whup ' last week.

Circa 1908.

[1] The deal took place near the end of last century, and I knew the Master, the dealer and the horse, and the bold and excellent horseman who bought Blood and Thunder—he called him ' Thunder,' and he turned out to be a thundering good one—in *his* hands only.

AN AULD SCOT ON THE DETAIL OF A FOX-HUNTER'S DRESS OF THE 'SIXTIES

THESE be things on which I dote :—
Slated seams in huntin' coat,
Saddle-claith an' sandwich pocket—
Toast-an'-tongue an' whisky locket,
Buttons plugg'd an' gilt aboot,
Thumb o' snab
An' collar tab.
Breeches detail alsna note :—
Pocket-fob
Ye canna rob,
Some wi' cockscomb, some wi'oot,
Buckskin bow in place o' garter—
Baith luik weel, sae quhat's it maätter.
Mickle things in breeks an' coat
Fill me fu' o' anecdote.

15th January, 1914.

BRITISH FREEDOM *v.* FOREIGN SAFETY

[I do not imply that all this furniture is not necessary when dealing with a bad broncho, but out hunting or anywhere else on a sane horse I would say it is entirely unnecessary and very uncomfortable both for the horse and rider.]

I LIKE to be always as near to the horse as I can,—
No chair-back behind, no shutter in front

And stirrups resembling a shoe,
Like they make for a Mexican crew,
No pads to the flap (just plain for a hunt)
To box in the legs and the seat of an Englishman.

25th August, 1922.

NOT A HOSSMAN

We call him 'Jimmy Bossman,'
That dressed up dandy Scot,
Who thinks he is a *hossman*—
But *hossmen* think he's not.

A *hossman* when he's walking,
And when he's close to *port* ;
But his riding and his talking
Are not the *hossman's* sort.

He's 'Bossman' *and* a hossman
To those who'll lick his sauce ;
But 'Bossman' *not* a hossman
To all who *know* a horse.

28th January, 1916.

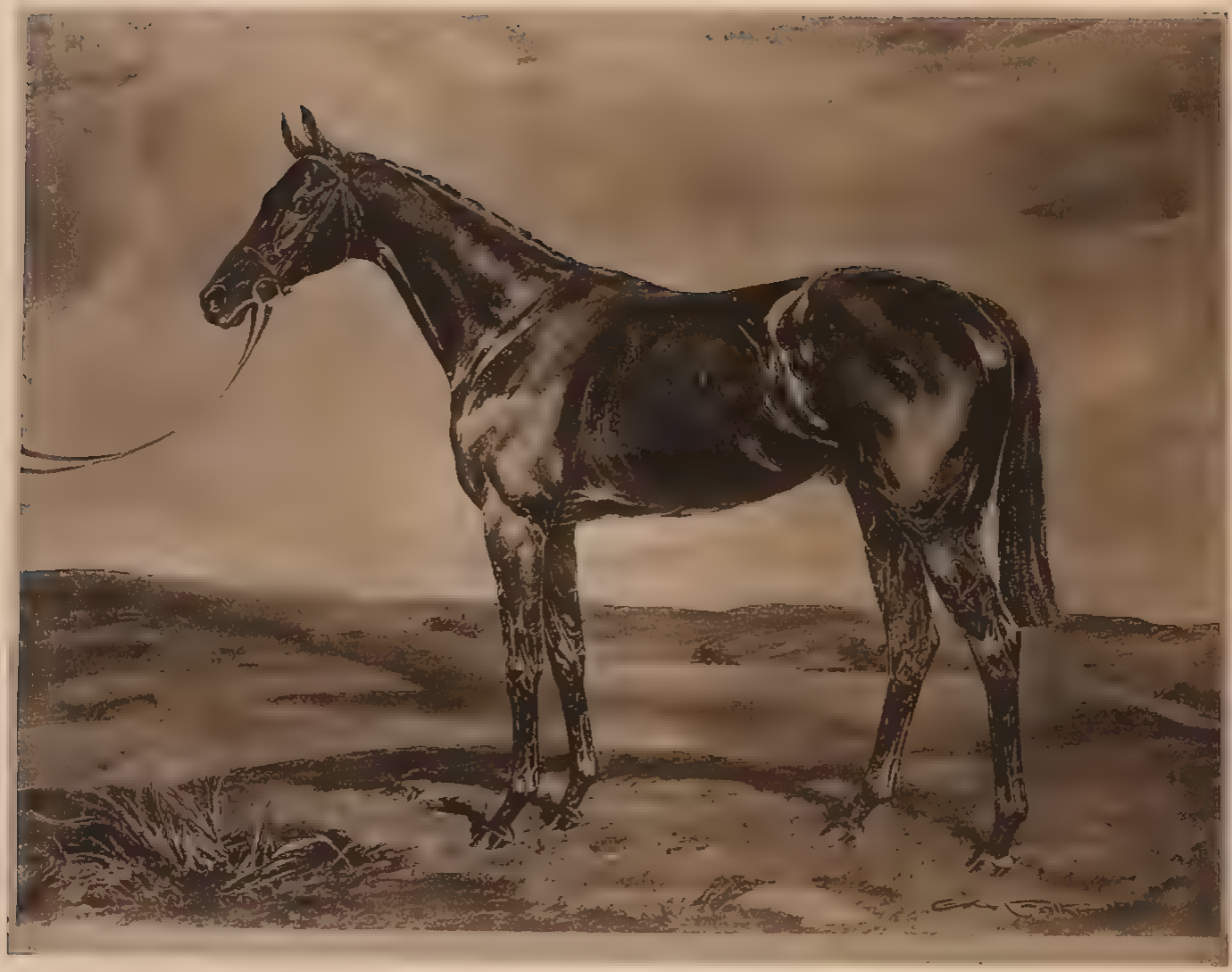


PLATE VIII.

Major Harold Cayzer's Poisoned Arrow *(by Spearmint-White Lie) on the Berkshire Downs.*

Painted at Hodcott House, West Ilsley, while he was in training with Captain R. F. K. Gooch, M.C., in 1924.



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A FARMER'S JUSTIFIABLE SOLILOQUY

[Concerning a M.F.H., a wretched horseman and poor judge of a hunter, whose showy but useless horses invariably take away a big part of each fence they negotiate. Compensation to farmers in his particular country is very little in proportion to what it ought to be for the damage done.]

SHALL we fill up the gaps, and seal up our senses,
To please the old 'goat' who is ripping the fences?
Let him give us more cash—away with pretences!—
And we'll fill up his gaps and forgive his *offences*.

OF THE SPORTSMAN

[A sportsman is, or has been, a sporting man of course. A sporting man is not necessarily a sportsman—very many are not. Never mind what his skill and endurance in field sports may be, the sporting man *must* be human, sympathetic and benevolent to all who come in his way before he can command the title of 'good sportsman.']

To M. T——, M.F.H., an ideal sportsman.

'TELL me not in mournful numbers'
That the sportsman's dying out,
That a load of debt encumbers
All who hunt and race about:
Prices up and taxes heavy
Don't distress the moneyed lot—
That sporting men can't levy
L.s.d.'s 'all Tommy rot'!

Rare good fellows, those who go in
Hard for sport ; and rarer still,
Those who let their dollars flow in
Sometimes to an empty till :
Sporting men and women, many ;
Sportsmen of the right sort, few—
Such as nobly think of any
Wanting who are sportsmen too.

9th January, 1924.

STARS OF THE CHASE

These spurs with the crop must stay where they are,
They shall hang on my wall as a relic—a star—
A guide to the days of the past that were best—
Happy times on a horse that I've ever since bless'd—
Ere I hunt, rid of all, for my last long rest.

6th January, 1914.

TO STELLA IN VIRGINIA

If you govern a horse you should hold a man—
If love be the nurse you employ ;
Stick tight to them both all your life if you can,
So you'll never know aught but joy.

I leave the whip and the bit to you,
The whip I have handled so long,
For I feel the beats of your heart are true,
And I wish they may never go wrong.

12th August, 1925.

THE KENTUCKY AS A HACK[1]

Watch an American out
Riding on pleasure (?) bent—
Bumping his liver about
To his heart's content !

Exercise only we say,
When *he* to the saddle jumps—
A serious kind of play,
Gymnastics and bumps ?

Thoroughbred hacks are above him,
Because he hangs on by the head ;
Once he has learned to love him,
He'd wish the Kentucky dead.

[1] In her valuable book, *Comments on Hacks and Hunters* (Scribners, 1922), Lida L. Fleitmann has made some remarks upon this subject which inspired me to write this rhyme. Let me say that this in no way alludes to all horsemen and horsewomen in the United States of America, where are to be found very many who can compete in the saddle with the best in the world. We've seen plenty of British liver-bumpers in our own Rotten Row.

The gaits of that horse let us measure :
A canter, not trotting, for pleasure,—
In the latter, like Arab, he's lacking ;
He can walk and can gallop,
And save you some jalap—
His trotting's decidedly *hacking* !

27th August, 1922.

OF A HORSE-COPER'S ADVERTISEMENT

[The essence of this rhyme is contained in a well-nigh forgotten chapter of prose entitled 'A Horse-dealer.' A clever and delightful bit of satire from the pen of Tom Hood]

WHENE'ER he speaketh, his spoke hath flying turns,
As many as any wheel !
And any vice in a horse or gross unsoundness
His *word* is sure to heal.

He telleth lies, not only white and black,
But bay and grey and roan
And chesnut, brown and cream, piebald and skewbald,
Such as he'll never own.

A nag that's only fit for kennel meat
Is *fit to go to hounds* ;
Or *would suit a very timid gentleman*
Who loves not leaps and bounds.

The runaway horse is *used to carry a lady*
And off the Gretna road ;
Of a stumbling cob, he says *the owner parted*
From him to go abroad.

Roaring he calleth *sound* ; and a high-blower
He compareth to Eclipse
Of racing fame, known well to all the world,
For he the wind outstrips.

This horse *would win a steeplechase*, for he's
As fast as any church—
Which the buyer would very soon find out
When he leaves him in the lurch.

With *him* a thorough-pin's synonymous
With a sound or *perfect leg*,
That you'd detect was in reality
No better than a peg.

If knees be broken, he's *well broke for saddle*
Or gig ; and if he rears,
Is *above hands sixteen high* (off which each rider
Right quickly disappears).

A biting mare, says he, shows *great good courage*—
Biting's no dangerous evil—
She merely bites the wind—she's only playful
(Though she should play the devil.)

A vicious, kicking horse he calls a horse
That *lifts his feet well up* ;
Grand action, a string-halt where a foot is raised
Well nigh from ground to croup.

A horse's kick he takes like a love-token—
Being much in love, he's blind
Unto all blemishes—sees virtues only,
And vices cannot find.

For a coper is truly Christian-like in practice,
Who ne'er depreciates
The character of e'en a soul-less brute—
Censure so much he hates !

In short, the worse a horse may be, the more
His price he chants, you'll find :
But should you be an ass—you're sure to think him
The kindest of the kind.

19th January, 1910.

A HORSE-LOVER'S PENALTY

I SIGHTED her far on ahead
In the shafts of a Newington butcher's van
A mare I knew well, but never the man :—
Long ago I was told she was dead.



PLATE IX

Mrs. Gayzer's TATRA *(by Lemberg), winner of the Jockey Club Stakes, Newmarket,* 1925.

Painted at Hodcott House, West Ilsley, while she was in training with Captain R. F. K. Gooch, M.C., in 1925.



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Painted at Hodcott House, West Ilsley, while she was in training with Captain R. F. K. Gooch, M.C., in 1925.

The curl and the cock of those ears
Were no other's, the carriage of head and the tail ;
And, as mem'ry flashed back to the day of her sale,
My eyes were welling with tears.

I rushed to the side of the mare,
I looked the old huntress all over and over ;
A stranger for ages to carrot and clover
I saw in the bones that were bare.

Ere she slipped in her stride on the lea,
There were none of the Hunt in the past to outpace her :
My 'Stella' !—I longed then and there to embrace her,
She was still 'the same sixpence' to me.

I smoothed down her poor lean neck ;
Then struggled away with a sigh and a groan
To wish—yes indeed—she were once more my own,
That years-smitten pitiful wreck.

17th March, 1917.

WESTMORLAND FOXHUNTERS OF OLD

In Westmorland no orthodoxes
Of horse and hound and hunting lore :
Grim enmity alone for foxes
Upon the Fells in days of yore.

A brace of a breed of short-legg'd terrier,
A hound or two from every Dale,
And cragsmen bold,—the more the merrier,—
Would meet to hunt upon the trail.

Each one a huntsman, as he tore on
Behind the pack left quite alone
To work the drag up to the borran
Where some old hill-side fox was known.

10th April, 1922.



FISTIANA

BLACK *VERSUS* WHITE ;

Or, The Great Fight between Johnson and Jeffries, which took place at Reno,[1] Nevada, U.S.A., on 4th July, 1910.

> '*As the chief who to combat advances*
> *Secure of his conquest before,*'
> So thou, in whose bright eyes there dances
> A vision of 'Jeff' on the floor.

The ring-side was swarming with black men and women,
While Jeffries and Johnson of world-renown'd might
(One seated at cards, th' other cracking his jokes !)
Were awaiting the awful summons to fight ;—
But the sound of the gong was music to Jack,
Who felt that his left would lay Jeff on his back.

On the fourth of July, at a quarter to three,
Met these sons of the Church [1] to battle it out,
The black man a hero of six hundred rounds,
The white man the gamest of 'whites' without doubt ;
And the sound of the gong came as music to Jack,
Who felt that his left would lay Jeff on his back.

[1] Both pugilists, so it was reported at the time, were sons of ministers of religion.

Jack Johnson, the boy for a terrible fight,—
As Achilles and Ajax, those fighters of old,—
A light-hearted negro, good-humour'd withal,
Would grab at a victory, so we are told,
And suffer defeat if it came in his way,
And still love to fight for many a day.

His opponent, Jim Jeffries, the heavier man,
With a neck and a chest fully fit for a bull—
He who vanquish'd black Jackson, Fitzsimmons and Corbet—
Should have wiped the floor with the African's wool—
But the sound of the gong proved music to Jack,
And a fling from his left would lay Jeff on his back :

The speed and the stamina of youth were lacking
This time in the giant of yore, and we felt
It was but a demand from youth to be served
On a man the mere shell of his former self—
Oh, that he'd reign'd on his alfalfa farm,
That he'd clung to his laurels and come to no harm !

* * * * * *

They advance ; they feint, and clinch breast to breast ;
Ere they'd broken away 'twas Jeffries who hook'd.
So finished the first of those mem'rable rounds,
On which such a concourse had savage-like look'd,—

For the law of the land permitted the fight,
Though the law, to a true sporting eye, be not right.[1]

As round after round they appear in the ring,
 Johnson blocks and he counters the blows of his man,
Assuming the crouch, nicking in when the moment
 Has come, and batters proud Jeff as he can—
Ah, the sound of the gong *is* music to Jack,
For he now knows his left will lay Jeff on his back.

He pummell'd and pounded the white man's head
 With a merciless hail of swinging blows—
Heavy jabs that told on the staggering Jeff,
 With the blood rushing fast from his mouth and his nose ;
And we seem'd to feel he'd be soon on his back,
Leaving the laurel for African Jack.

The nigger was master at every stage,
 With his stiff snappy clean upper-cuts and his hooks ;
And he dazzl'd the white man with loud mocking laughter,
 And drove into Jimmy to alter his looks,
As he sprang like a tiger and swung at his jaw
And sent the ex-champion down to the floor.
And he never felt prouder did Johnson the Black
When he gazed upon Jeff lying flat on his back—

[1] Boxing under different conditions is, of course, all right, when the rounds are limited in number.

Aye, the sound of that gong *was* music to Jack
When he stood over Jeffries ' knocked out ' on his back ![1]

1910.

'THE FUSSY FOLKS FUSS,'

Concerning the projected fight between Massa Johnson and Bombardier Wells.

(*Many say*) ' The fight as a fight is all right,'
Though they censure the cash it would bring.[2]
Now the pitting of ' Black ' *versus* ' White '
(The anti-fight fussy folks sing)
Is a monstrous and brutal display,
Engendering race against race ;
And we very soon might have to pay
For a terrible national disgrace.

' The fight as a fight is all wrong,'
Churchill roared, as he bled for the nation,
' And this you shall know before long—
Or I'm very much out of my station.'

[1] Since I wrote these lines I have come across a couple of old prints—' Crib *v.* Molyneaux.' Crib was ' that renowned, heroic, irresistible Thomas who beat Molyneaux, the negro artist, in the presence of twenty thousand roaring Britons,' wrote W. E. Henley. History repeats itself. Almost exactly a hundred years ago (28th Sept. 1811) a Black and a White met one another in the ring, at Thisselton Gap, Co. Rutland, to fight the biggest fight of the year. Strange to relate it was a left-hander, too, which won the match for Crib, and broke the Black's jaw.

[2] This, it was thought, would damage true sport—the winner was to receive £10,000 !

We are thus in the dark *re* the best 'un,
For the fussy folk were not forsaken,—
The Home Secretary settled the question,
Stopped the fighting, and so saved our bacon !

RELIGION IN THE RING

At Akron, Ohio, U.S.A.; or, a Hint for our coming General Election in Britain.

The prelude to a prize-fight was the utterance of a prayer ;
And amongst the crowded people was a parson and a mayor.

The mayor he led the parson into the fighting ring,
Where the parson asked the people to stand with him and sing.

(Sure, the spectacle of sportsmen singing hymns before a fight,
While the pugilists are waiting, is an awe-inspiring sight !)

Then he offered up a prayer, too, and prayed without alarm,
For, said he, ' A well-fought prize-fight can do the *soul* no harm.'

So the prelude to a prize-fight was the utterance of a prayer ;
And amongst the crowded people a parson was a stayer ;—

No one was more delighted, no one applauded more,
Than the parson at that prize-fight which ended in a draw.

* * * * * * *

We know now what to do when we want the fighting fair—
America has taught us—we'll sing religious music and begin with parson's prayer !

21st January, 1910.
F.S.B.

LET YOUR BOYS BOX

[' Boxing makes for activity, a light foot, a quick hand, and a steady eye.'—GLADYS COOPER.]

If you've ever a lad who would know how to live,
Let him learn when he's young the manliest part—
Make him know how to take as well as to give
With a smile on his face and a laugh in his heart.

BOMBARDIER WELLS *v.* BANDSMAN BLAKE

['Bombardier Wells, English heavy-weight champion, was at the Palladium, London, on the 4th March, 1914, the richer by £1600 and—two black eyes.']

Facing the Gunner they put him.
It was give and take
With the Bandsman Blake—
With more of the take to suit him!

Falling with speed on his foeman,
It was 'right, left, right'[1]
Of the Bombardier's might
All on the jaw of the 'Blow-man.'

[1] Bombardier Wells said: 'I don't mind whispering to you Blake had me in trouble in the third round, just prior to that left "upper cut" put to his chin, which took a heap of ginger out of him. Just you look at his weight compared with mine [Blake was only a middle-weight boxer]. Breaking away, I shot my right across, bobbed the left, and then banged the right over once more. It was right, left, right all on the jaw.'

So ended the match with three whackers—
A ' right, left, right '
Of the Bombardier's might—
Cheering the hearts of his backers.

ADVICE TO BOXERS; OR, A GOOD ADVERTISEMENT FOR A QUACK PILL

If once a month you take this pill,
You'll never know what it is to be ill.

If once a month you take a couple,
You'll make yourself a bit more supple.

If once a month you should take three,
Jimmy's[1] no chance with such as thee!

[1] Jimmy Wilde, champion boxer.

RACING BALLADS, ETC.



PLATE X.

GREAT SPORT ON THE RUSSLEY DOWNS. *Great Sport (by Gallinule-Gondolette) was placed third in the Derby of* 1913.
Painted at Russley Park, Wilts, in 1913.

To talk about horses if any man can.

* * * * *



PLATE X.

GREAT SPORT ON THE RUSSLEY DOWNS. *Great Sport (by Gallinule-Gondolette) was placed third in the Derby of 1913*

Painted at Russley Park, Wilts, in 1913

ROUND A RACING STABLE

'I'm going the round of the horses at ten,
Will you stay where you are or come with me, Ben?'

Ben laid down his pipe (No Smoking Allowed),
He was glad o' the chance, the idea made him proud,—
His old friend the trainer, John Soveran's the man
To talk about horses if any man can.

* * * * * *

Bill Shore, the head lad, meets them both in the yard,
And the first they set eyes on 's a hunter called Bard,
One that's carried this trainer through many a chase,
And an old hand at winning a point-to-point race.
Seven hunters look out of their comf'table boxes
That have said *au revoir* for six months to the foxes.

And now for the racehorses, twenty in all,
With a box each for nineteen, and one in a stall.
Every horse with a capable lad at his head
Standing smart by the wall at the edge of his bed,
As the trainer steps in to make his remarks,
Giving some of them praise, and some of them barks.

'There's Fumitor—a modest weed ;
And Meadow Sweet, and Runnymede,
A horse that's hard to fault on looks,
Such as you'd see in last century books,
Not limned in the style of some modern "cooks" ;
A rare good horse, and a horse for pace—
When his line is set in a pleasant place ;
A difficult one to manage at first,
Ere the work begins—in the heart of the burst,
But goes like a lamb with his little Lintott—
Is there anything having four legs that will not ?

'Then what about this one—Beaujolais ?
A funnier still—too foolish in play
Who will paw at the moon in front of the tape,
And is ever so long to make his escape
When the barrier's up ; when he does he will settle
To work with a heart and show off his mettle
By catching his field and heading the lot,
And winning hard held almost in a trot—
That's the Beaujolais colt we bought from a Scot !

'Here's Tenible, one with a tube in his throat,
That would empty a bin, not leaving an oat
If left to himself, yet a glutton for work
Who, we thought, could outrun the invincible Turk,
Giving ten pounds away to this Tenible chap ;

But he fell on his nose and met with mishap,
And now it's all standing and eating with him—
He's clean off his racing and out of the swim.

'That big brown horse there biting the manger,
Just over from Erin, is well named Danger.
He's a stranger to us, though we'd heard of his glory
In fields afar : it's an Irish story
The way he ran off with the Conyngham Cup
And gave his first win to the boy they put up,
How he cleared the ditches one after another
And fought his long way to the front with a brother,
The best over there, and beat him a head,
Then dropped in the weighing enclosure for dead.

'But he came to life, and his owner sold him
To the first who'd come with a man to hold him.
The poor brute woke so mad that he tore
The coat off the back of the travelling lad,
And everyone kicked him and everyone swore
The Devil was in him to make him so mad ;
He'd have savaged the lad then and there, but again
He went down as if dead. They sent for old Lane,
The Vet, who declared he was living not dead.
In an hour he was moving and up on his legs
Like a sheep, his madness all gone. They led
Him away to a box at Kilmansegg's.

Next day his new owner got on his back
And gave him a breather along the track ;
He showed no fight, and he came to hand
As easy as any good horse in the land.
A day or two after, they showed him a hurdle,
And the fuss he made there would make your blood curdle :
He refused and refused, then went down on his knees
And rolled clean over his rider to tease
Him a bit—he caught at his breeches and tore
'Em nigh off and left the lad covered with gore,
For he got his teeth in, and then galloped away
To career on the course for the rest of the day.
Well, they took him at last, when he'd quieted down,
And stabled him safe at the *Mitre and Crown.*
The jump had all left him, but not so the pace,
And that's why he's here to be trained for a race.
He's a mental case just now ; if he waits
Three months for the Goodwood Cup, and the Fates
Are kind, he will easily beat Better Plan,
He can gallop and stay all day long—that he can,
As he did when his hurdling and 'chasing began.
No lad in my stable to-day will ride him—
Where is the jockey who'll take him and hide him ?—
And that's what he wants, not caressing,
But for playing those tricks a proper good dressing.
He'll be out next week, and I'll get on his back,
And he'll start by being the trainer's hack ;

If he tries his tricks when I get him afoot
I'll teach him a lesson—he's too good to shoot !
'Yon's a good-looking chesnut, Hurry On's son,
And four of the races he's run in he's won.
Once the hope of the stable for all this year,
We may soon find His Lordship distressed in the rear.
He is still in the first of the "Classics" next week,
Of his chances just now I can't honestly speak.
He impressed me so much a few days ago
That I tried him the distance with Gay Garryvoe—
And you know that big winner is not counted slow.
He left him behind at the five furlong post,
And beat him twelve lengths and killed him almost.
But to-day, nearing home, he ran short in his stride,
As if he were seized with a pain in his side ;
His nostrils were crimson, his eyes weren't clear,
He sweated a lot—Influenza, I fear.
If he's coughing to-morrow his chances are dim—
It's hospital then, and no "Guineas" for him.

'Here's a Hurry On colt out of Gondolette—
He'd distance the lot if he'd run like he ate !
He too's for "The Guineas," a mystery horse
That may win down at Epsom—but *not* on this course.

'What d'ye think of that Spearmint filly ? She won
In a canter at Ascot from a dozen all done

Last year, and she'll win there again with luck,
Though the odds are against her—she'll have to meet Gluck.
She's just been painted ; superstitious folk think
That a portrait some bad luck is sure to enlink,
But we are no fools in this stable of ours—
We've been brought up to think luck rests with the Powers,
And *not* with an artist who knows his job well
And leaves every " sitter " as sound as a bell.

'The others I'll show you are not up to much,
Save this eight-year-old gelding once known as Old Dutch,
And he's won heaps of Handicaps, all at one pace ;
What we feel he likes best is the " Walk Over " race ! '

* * * * * *

'Here they come ; we'll be off, so jump on that hack,
He's a nailer to go and you'll find him a " crack "
On the grass, but he stumbles on roads, so take care,
And he kicks—the red on his tail means " Beware ! "
Keep him well to the off of this 'chaser of mine,
Keep him feeling the bit, and we'll get along fine.
We'll follow the string on the moor,
And I think you'll enjoy the tour.'

22*nd April*, 1926.

OF MARSKE, BY MARSIPLOMA

[A certain trainer, whom I will call John Law, had two of his own horses entered at a country meeting. The one was to be ridden by an amateur, and the other by one of the best professionals of the day. The amateur won his race very easily on a clever, steady old 'chaser, and owing to the professional having met with an accident earlier in the day he came and offered his services to the trainer for the next race. The following is the conversation between the conceited young amateur and the wise old trainer.]

'He's easy held at exercise—he comes to hand at once ;
If I cannot ride him here, Sir, I'll vote myself a dunce.'

'Get up in cap and jacket, to the saddle top-boots weld,
And hold that chaser 'chasing as no man yet has held !
And I'd give my all to have you, for I'd double that and more
With Marske, by Marsiploma, or *my* name's not John Law—,
I know he'll win the 'National, the Lancashire besides,
If only I could get one to hold him in his rides ;
He'd have his work cut out too,—the best have been on Marske,
And the best have owned being beaten and begged an easier task.
With *you* he'd run out promptly—you'd never see the jumps,
He'd cut your fingers off first and leave you just the stumps !
I'll keep him in the stable and wait till someone comes
With hands and heart and sinews to pick up those two " plums."
Maybe you're fit to mount him and sit him at his work,
But when it comes to 'chasing—I'd see you first in Kirk !
There *may* come those to thwart him whom no one yet has quelled—

There *may* come those to hold him as no man yet has held ;
But put you by that jacket, and cap and breeches too,
And keep them clean for others—my Marske's no ride for *you*.'

1925.

'DANNY' MAHER'S DEAD HEAT

[Recalling the famous jockey's own thoughts during the historic finish of the Eclipse Stakes (£10,000), when he on Lord Rosebery's Neil Gow dead-heated with Mr. Faire's Lemberg.[1] Maher had said he was 'desperately anxious to win for the greatest sportsman in the land, Lord Rosebery.' He was riding, he said, 'the funniest horse that any man could ever ride, one which you know can win *if* he cares to.']

Two furlongs from home he draws up to the horse,
The *only* one left to beat on the course.
What a maddening anxiety ! (to others sublime)—
What a strain crowded into some seconds of time !
'Danny' feels he is hanging, not doing his best—
Ah ! here is the rub—must he still hesitate
To hit him in dread of his *then* doing less ?—
Must he be but a slug ?—is it all but too late ?—
He had desperately ridden him with hands and with heels—
He had made to his senses the best of appeals ;
So he picks up the whip to just risk it,
Gives him one light'ning cut on the brisket,—
And now comes the grief that he's lost him the race

[1] A short while before, the same two horses, with the same jockeys up (Dillon rode Lemberg), met in the 2000 Guineas, and Neil Gow won by a short head.

As he swerves from the whip—no, he puts on the pace,
In a whirl of excitement they're just past the post,
Head and head, to know who has won and who's lost. . . .
A dead heat !—even that is relief to his ears,
And he welcomes the verdict 'midst deafening cheers.

1915.

A SHOOTING STAR—APPRENTICE ELLIOTT

PHENOMENAL jockeys are sometimes born
Descending with both feet at once :
One day they are not, the next they are,—
And they've never worn cap o' the dunce.

E. C. Elliott is one of those shooting stars ! [1]
In the space of a single year,
Though only a kid, he challenged the lot ;
And Ascot stamped his career.

He has nerves of steel and hands of silk,
Remarkable judgment of pace,
And best of all, a cool level head
That should win him many a race.

From now till the end of the Flat we'll see
A royal and stirring do—

[1] Fred Archer and Frank Wootton were notable stars to achieve an exalted position during the spring of their apprenticeship.

A fight till the bugle blows ' Cease fire ! '—
'Twixt Elliott and Donoghue.[1]

1st September, 1923.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE TEVIOTDALE FOXHUNTERS' CLUB RACE

[This was run at 1.20 p.m. on the 3rd April, 1914, over eight miles (6½ miles point) of fair hunting country, from Huntley Hill to a point near Whitehaugh, by Hawick. The time taken by the winner was 26 mins.]

The tryst was Braw Yet, at the Haining,
The country the Duke of Buccleuch's,
And the weather ideal (*not* raining !),
Huntley Hill was the spot where they loose
To the sound of a lusty ' view holloa,'
And the field darted off in a bunch,
With a line in the mind to a follow
On the top of a wee bit o' lunch.

Bold yeoman and farmer and member
Who'd a share in the best of the pace
Have every good cause to remember
That Border hill point-to-point race ;—

[1] On Friday, 23rd November, 1923, the races at Manchester having been abandoned through frost and fog, Elliott and Donoghue dead-heated with 89 wins each for the championship.

Of the twenty catch-weights that were started
Nearly all galloped up at the end
On cattle well-bred and great-hearted
With no fear of 'bellows to mend.'

There was Sprot[1] on 'The Raider' of Riddell
And Roberts[2] and Cheape[3] on 'Nightlight,'
And a Cox with his 'Fiddler' less fiddle,
And Douglas[4] astride of his 'Knight,'
The farmer who figured as winner
A little in front of the lot;
And others to well earn their dinner
Were Caverhill[5], Turner[6] and Scott.[7]

4th April, 1914.

[1] Captain Sprott of Riddell, who finished sixth, and fourth for the Club Cup.

[2] Mr. J. Roberts, of Selkirk, on 'Seafarer,' who finished fifth.

[3] Captain (afterwards Colonel) Gray-Cheape, joint-master of the Berwickshire, and brother of Major Leslie Cheape, the famous polo player, both sons of 'The Squire' of Bentley Manor, Worcestershire. Captain Cheape finished second for the Club Cup.

[4] Mr. Thomas Douglas on 'Belted Knight.'

[5] S.Q.M.S. Caverhill on 'Glencoe III.,' who was first for the Yeomanry Cup.

[6] Mr. F. Turner, of Upper Nisbet, who finished seventh and second for the Farmers' Cup. He is a son of the late Sir William Turner, Principal of Edinburgh University.

[7] Mr. T. Robson Scott, Master of the Jedforest Hounds, on 'Alpha,' who was second, and winner of the Club Cup.

'CHASING AT AINTREE[1]

'THEY'RE away!' with the sun streaming down on their jackets—
They're away with a flashing and dazzling of colour,
Twenty-six in the silk, twenty-six in the saddle,
They're away on the easily held and the puller.

'They're awa-a-ay!' comes the echoing note of the people.
What a dive from the post on the part of each rider!—
How they stoop to the drop of the flag of the starter!
How they dash to the front with the greed of a spider!

And now they are nearing the first of the fences—
O the strain on the sense of that revel of rushing!
And now they are at it, and now they are over;
Some have taken it clean and some with a brushing.

All, all are well over, and none have come crumplers—
Twenty-six in the silk, twenty-six sitting tighter
Go galloping onwards, each glued to the saddle,
In sight of the guard-rail now whiter and whiter.

[1] This is a record of no particular Grand National, but just the expression of some of my own thoughts after having seen the great race run on several occasions. I saw Cloister, with Dollery up, win in 1893, and I have looked over a number of other great winners in the paddock at Aintree, including Why Not, Manifesto, Drogheda, etc., and talked to their jockeys.



PLATE XI.

BROOD MARES AT TULLY, 1914. *On the left, Colonia (1903), by Persimmon-Sandblast, with her nine months' foal, All White (by White Eagle) that was sixth and third in the Grand National. On the right Lady Lightfoot (by Isinglass-Glare), dam of Prince Palatine*

Painted at Tully, Kildare, in 1914.

And here's the spot to see them extended—
Thirty feet from the take-off to where they'll be landed,
And here is the spot where there's sure to be trouble—
A hundred to one that a few will be [illegible]

There's Anthony there on old Ally Sloper
To lift him with ease at the far away corner,
And there's somebody else riding viciously jealous
Who'll find himself filling a part of the yawner!

The one that's the favourite's a stag at the blackthorn
As he raises his heels in respectable fashion—
No imposter is *he* with but paddock pretences,
For racing is in him and lepping's his passion.

While many are blund'ring, refusing and pecking,
And some are pulled up and a dozen sent spinning,
The horse of our heart—the horse of our choosing—
Is Anthony's mount—Ally Sloper's like winning.

There are four near the water, four have it together,
Ally Sloper lands clear, with the others just [illegible]
Round again they go flying, and then at the [illegible]
The favourite's down, and we know now who'll [illegible]

But he's mounted again and as quickly set striding
(With a jockey like Brown there's no thought of dying);
They've cleared the next two and [illegible] at Becher's;
The first three to have it are here [illegible]



PLATE XI.

Brood Mares at Tully, 1914. *On the left, Colonia* (1903), *by Persimmon-Sandblast, with her nine months' foal, All White* (*by White Eagle*) *that was sixth and third in the Grand National. On the right Lady Lightfoot* (*by Hinglass-Glare*), *dam of Prince Palatine.*

Painted at Tully, Kildare, in 1914.

And here is the spot to see them extended—
Thirty feet from the take-off to where they'll be landed,
And here is the spot where there's sure to be trouble—
A hundred to one that a few will be stranded !

There's Anthony there on old Ally Sloper
To lift him with ease at the far away corner,
And there's somebody else riding viciously jealous
Who'll find himself filling a part of the yawner !

The one that's the favourite's a stag at the blackthorn
As he raises his heels in respectable fashion—
No imposter is *he* with but paddock pretences,
For racing is in him and lepping's his passion.

While many are blund'ring, refusing and pecking,
And some are pulled up and a dozen sent spinning,
The horse of our heart—the horse of our choosing—
Is Anthony's mount—Ally Sloper's like winning.

There are four near the water, four have it together,
Ally Sloper lands clear, with the others just in it ;
Round again they go flying, and then at the ' Open '
The favourite's down, and we know now who'll win it,—

But he's mounted again and as quickly set striding
(With a jockey like Brown there's no thought of dying) ;
They've cleared the next two and are racing at Becher's ;
The first three to have it are both shot and lying.

Ally Sloper now leads, and Valentine's near him,
Jack Anthony meets it in true jockey fashion ;
The favourite is over and pressing him harder,
And Brown sees his chance to get up as they dash on.

Side by side the last fence will be taken together—
The favourite is up and they're galloping level.
'Come away !' yells the crowd to the favourite's jockey,
'Use your whip !' 'Use your spurs !' 'Damn it, ride like the devil !'

So he did ; and Jack Anthony didn't, but coolly
He nursed his game horse and, steadily seated,
Brought him on past the post with the soul-stirring verdict,
'Ally Sloper a neck,'—the favourite defeated.

December 1919.

HOW THE DOCTOR LOST THE POINT-TO-POINT

[In the autumn of 1912, nearly two years before the Great War and nineteen years after this race was run, I visited the scene of my first Point-to-Point and wrote the rhyme. I can only look upon it as a truthful record of a once much talked of sporting event, with no endeavour about it to reach the 'noble heights' even of ballad-making. Had it not been that several of those alluded to here have since become prominent in various walks of life, I should never have thought of including this early effusion of a budding balladist with his later and, I trust, much better efforts.]

'Twas a mem'rable time for this 'Doctor in boots'
When he went out of town 'with a breakfast that suits'

Him of porridge and milk, chop and coffee,
In a red coat he borrowed (he paid for the boots
With tops just the colour of toffee)
And jumped in the train by the side of his grey
To be rattled along on a Point-to-point day.[1]

* * * * * *

Old Hamilton Cross is gay and alive
With sportsmen who ride and sportsmen who drive
From the town to the tryst of the races ;[2]
Each road all the way is as full as a hive
Of persons with West Country faces,
Ere the huntsman and ' whips ' [3] begin clearing the coast
For the Doctor and others to ride to the post.

In an old-fashioned barn all stood to be weighed,
The burden twelve-seven, and no one more made,
And plenty had lead 'neath the saddle ;

[1] 12th April, 1893. A party of eight of us, including six of the Carabiniers (6th Dragoon Guards) with Major Sprot from Piershill, Jack Drybrough and self, left Edinburgh with our horses by the 10 o'clock express.

[2] Mr. Scott's Unthank farm-steading, Mossend, six miles north-west of Hamilton.

[3] Harry Judd (b. 1839) and Will Webster, respectively huntsman and first-whip of the Lanark and Renfrewshire Foxhounds, who were got over by Colonel Robertson-Aikman to help to clear the course. Judd was apprenticed in his twelfth year to John Day, the famous trainer, at Danebury, and eventually figured in the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot ; but after seven years he gave up the racecourse for hunting, and was with hounds for forty-four years, serving in turn with the West Norfolk under Mr. Villebois, the Atherstone, Quorn, Cottesmore, etc. Webster took Judd's place in 1901, and later on was huntsman for a few seasons to the L. and S.

And after the weighing [1] for good luck they prayed,
And forthwith their 'chasers they straddle.
By the time it was two every man found his seat,
And was off on parade for a cross-country feat.

The heir of the Motherwell Laird, a Scots Guard,
Led the way on his Peterkin pulling him hard,
Then the Doctor, then Dodds with his Sheers
Behind Ruthven on Courtney, the first on the card ;
Four or five of the smart Carabiniers,
Ned Young on Cleopatra and Reiss on Bon Mot,
And Reid riding Credit to whip up the lot.

On a mount that is perfect (except for his grunt)
A notable 'Back' [2] with the flag sits in front,
The Master [3] alone is seen with him
As judge on the pride of his Harrier Hunt,
While each one rides up to the rhythm
Of champing of snaffle and creak of the saddle
For the welter-weight starter to signal 'Skedaddle!'

[1] I remember that 'Sandy' Ruthven and I were the last two to be weighed. I weighed him and he weighed me! We had met on the road out to the course, and I noticed he was riding a chesnut with warts on his belly that his brother, the Master of Ruthven, had recently mounted me on in Ireland. It was a remarkable coincidence that I should meet the horse again in this way and without knowing too that he was to run here.

[2] Mr. W. 'Jack' Drybrough, the greatest polo back at the end of last century.

[3] Colonel Robertson-Aikman, C.B., of The Ross, Hamilton, renowned for his Harrier blood—his hounds frequently winning championships at Peterborough. He became Master of the Lanark and Renfrewshire Foxhounds in 1896.

At the sound of his voice and the drop of the flag
One and all they sit down and set out like a stag,
 It is ' Cram down your hat too and hold him
Well up to the bit as you value your nag ! '
 (All this at the post ' Jack ' had told 'em),
For the first of the thirty big natural fences
Is *the* one of all to unfetter the senses.

They are off ! The Doctor is leading the ' field '
On a flea-bitten grey that to no horse would yield
 His pride of place in Linlithgow ;
A Dragoon,[1] with a cutting-whip only to wield,
 Charges gallantly next, and therewith go
A dozen good fellows on all sorts of ' cattle '
A-stirring the crowd with their thunder and rattle.

With a bound like a rocket the favourite to-day
Is over (or through)—this great-hearted grey—
 And goes striding away in the stubble ;
The Dragoon—' He is down ! '—' No, he's not,' they all say,
 ' It's only a bookmaker's bubble ! '
He too's on the right side sailing along
Out of sight of an officer ' pal ' on the wrong,

[1] Captain E. L. Reiss, of the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers) on his Bon Mot Amongst other Carabiniers who were riding at this meeting was Major Sprot, now Colonel Sir Alexander Sprot, Bart., C.M.G., who defeated Mr. Asquith (Lord Oxford and Asquith) for a seat in Parliament. Captain Elsworthy, too, was riding, one of those who fell a victim to the Boer ' white flag ' treachery in 1900.

Who is gloriously held up aloft where he's stuck
Amongst branches and brambles and thorns, and his luck
Will not come to his aid, while another
Beside him lies equally pounded, struck
Off his mount by a too loving brother ;
The rest battle through with a toss or a blunder,
Leaving the yokels with wide eyes to wonder.

As he passes the coaches pulled up by the stand,
Thronged with people who've come from all parts of the land
For this popular Lanarkshire meeting,
The red-coated Doctor has Buckshot in hand ;
But the ' bookies ' prepare for his beating—
It is odds in their favour—the Doctor is down !
And his place has been filled by the man on the brown.

He is up though and at it in earnest again,
But down he comes headlong once more in the drain
In front of the rasper beyond it.[1]
The rest of the horses have pressed without pain
Through the gap, and to spur have responded,
And leave him three furlongs at least in the rear.
But the Doctor's not drowned by water or fear,

[1] It was not meant that this part of the fence should be taken—it was, when the drain was swollen over its banks, as it was at this time, an almost impracticable jump for any hunter. The gap in the tall quickset hedge higher up the brae was the spot which those coming behind made for, though this particular fence was not flagged as it should undoubtedly have been—the leader here, if a game fellow, would naturally go straight and suffer in consequence.

He is off in their wake at a galloping pace—
He knows how to ride (does he know how to race?)
Alone with the rarest of horses
Beneath him, he's labouring face to face
With the longest [1] and stiffest of courses,
Not a riderless horse nor a soul in his sight
As he helps himself out of his sorrowful plight.

Still game as the gamest, old Buckshot requires
No spur at his girth, no whip till he tires;
The stoutest of hearts and big bellows,
The strongest of thighs that a huntsman admires
Has the horse of this hardest of fellows;
Not a possible place has he ever refused,
No effort of his has his rider abused.

Every jump is a bank with a hedge on the top,
Yet he takes 'em in stride and goes over them 'pop.'
And now comes the deuce of a double—
In and out of the hard North road with a drop;[2]
But he does it without any trouble—
He shot in the air with the spring of a flea,
'The space that he cleared was a caution to see.'

* * * * * *

[1] About 4½ miles.

[2] The second time the North road was crossed, between Hatton Rigg and Unthank farm.

By now the van's sobbing with bellows to mend—
No steed but has little of vigour to spend ;
From the centaur-like way they have striven
It's certain that none will come in at the end
Save a chesnut well ridden by Ruthven,[1]
A well-tried young sportsman, a soldier, V.C.,
A good 'un to hounds, no better than he :

As they drop in the ditches, or peck on the plough,
One by one knows he's beaten and useless enow.
But Buckshot, good horse, does not sigh at
The game, he is galloping on to the brow
Of the hill where there's Courtney to quiet—
The chesnut with Ruthven still lobbing along
Away in the front, no one else going strong.

* * * * * *

The two come together to finish the race ;
They are now on the flat and increasing the pace ;
The roar and the din and the cheering,
Such as never was heard at a Lanarkshire 'chase,
Goads them on as they both come careering
In front of the stand, hands down as they ride
For the last of the jumps without shortening a stride.

[1] Pronounced riv'en—Colonel the Honble. Alexander G. A. Hore-Ruthven, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (Welsh Guards, formerly 3rd Batt. Highland Light Infantry, Cameron Highlanders, and King's Dragoon Guards) on the Master of Ruthven's Courtney.

Side by side at the bank, fenced strongly on top,
They cleverly rise from the stubble and drop
In the plough. 'No win in a canter!'—

'Yes it is'; with a peck coming down neck and croup,
Old Buckshot is open to banter;
There he lies huddled up (himself not the sinner)
While Ruthven rides home for his brother[1] a winner.

Ah, that touch of the rowel!—a touch and no more
As they flew at the fence, just enough they all swore
To make him peck badly and flounder.
Why didn't he leave him and trust to the core
Of so gallant a horse?—A sounder,
A surer, was never got ready to chase:
He had won but for that—the *inopportune prod* that lost him the race!

* * * * * *

Old Time has slipped by—many years have now fled—
Yet the race it still lives and the Doctor's not dead,
Though death here and there has left traces.

[1] Walter Patrick, The Master of Ruthven, a lieutenant in the Scots Guards (quartered then at Richmond Barracks, Dublin), now Major-General Lord Ruthven, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

The Honble. G. Carter-Hamilton, of the Scots Guards (now Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, K.T., C.V.O., M.C.), on Peterkin, was a bad second, a whole field behind. Lord Hamilton was Lord-in-Waiting to King Edward VII., and is a leading man in the Jockey Club.

Not a little of change has been made, so it's said,
On Unthank, the scene of the races ;
But the Doctor, unchanged, declares in this lay,
The best of his days was that Point-to-point day.

18th October, 1912.

OF THE RIDDEN AND RIDERLESS

If they *will* not balance their bodies a bit—
If they *will* hang on to the reins—
How *can* they hope in the saddle to sit ?—
A smash comes next for their pains !

With heart and soul we pity the one
Who breaks his collar bone—
Yet *how* much better the horses run
When their mouths are left alone ![1]

7th August, 1924.

[1] We all admire the look of a loose horse finding his own way over the fences in a steeplechase, and how seldom does he fall.

PAPYRUS'S PROSPECTS

For the International Cup and £20,000.[1]

To Betting Fools.

OVER a track made soft
By the heavy rain of a day,
America's best colt, Zev,
And Papyrus will be at play.

'Not a knowledgable racing man
Will give him a doggie's chance'—
Look at his real condition—
What an owl could see at a glance!

[1] This match originated with the late Major August Belmont, the owner of Tracery (bred in Kentucky), winner of the St. Leger in 1912. Tracery (sold afterwards for £53,000 to an Argentine breeder) was the sire of Papyrus, whose grandsire, Rock Sand, won the Derby in 1903, and his great-grandsire, Sainfoin, won it in 1890. Papyrus won the Derby of 1923, but was beaten by Lord Derby's Tranquil in the St. Leger. Zev is by The Finn—Miss Kearney, and this year (1923) has already won eight out of nine races. Mr. Irish, a Northamptonshire farmer, owns Papyrus, and Basil Jarvis is his trainer. Papyrus was easily beaten by Zev by five lengths. American trainers had recommended toe-clips for Papyrus's plates, to give him a hold in the mud—the Belmont Park track is not a grass one; but he wore flat plates only for the race. The first few days of his passage across the Atlantic were very rough ones, and he was much buffeted about, and again he was not fully acclimatised, and did not have as much as a fortnight's work in America on the dirt track to which he was of course not accustomed. Under such circumstances it was not surprising that the English colt was beaten. He was also a bit too big in condition to be matched against a horse that was in perfect racing condition.

But Zev in his usual form,
Forgetting a 'skin disease,'
Will gallop away with the Cup ;—
So lay as you damn well please !

The morning before the Great Match, 20th October, 1923.

THE IRONY OF FATE

(Lines inscribed beneath a picture.)

Once a brilliant 'chaser, of brilliant huntress born ;
Next a hopeless hireling of his glory shorn.
Now the hack of gipsies, turned out on the grass,
Waiting for the sunset of his life to pass.

TO T. PICKERNELL, ESQ.[1] ('MR. THOMAS') OF KINGSHEATH, BIRMINGHAM

Here's a health to a gentleman jock—Mr. Thomas !—
Who had won his way quickly to fame,
And has trod the not always clean path of the sportsman
Without the least stain on his name.

9th November, 1912.

[1] Mr. Pickernell was unconscious at the time my letter containing this and other rhymes reached him, and died two days afterwards, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. He rode in seventeen Grand Nationals, winning on Anatis (1860), The Lamb (1870), and Pathfinder (1875), and was placed on several other occasions.



PLATE XII

The Ditch on the Hill. *Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in* 1921



PLATE XII

The Dutch on the Hill — *Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1921.*

THE BEST AND THE WORST OF THE TURF

THE needy and the seedy and the seamy side, we're taught,
Are oftener more concerned with the odds than with the sport ;

As a welsher tops the palisade to catch an early train,
They stick at nothing evil for the sake of sordid gain.

The crowd that goes horse-racing is a motley one at best,
Yet the few above suspicion atone for all the rest ;

For the magnate (*not* a ' mushroom ') and the manly side, we know,
Are more concerned with jockeys and the horses that will *go*.

September, 1920.

BILL ON HIS PIG LUCK

THEY tell me a pig bringeth luck,
That a silver one makes a good mascot.
Well, I'm not a believer in ' luck,'
But I bought one and took it to Ascot.

I lost all my money, of course,
Having put a few pounds on ' Lord Nolan ' ;
And that was my luck with the horse—
And the pig and the purse were both stolen !

A HOUSE-PAINTER'S CHOICE FOR THE DERBY[1]

Well, I'm not going in for *Artist Glow*!
Bicarbonate (of soda)? No.
And Swift and Sure is sure to be poor—
Slow and Uncertain might be truer.
Colorado, Coronach, Comedy King,
Look more like moving well on the wing.
But I don't care a snuff for the public voice,
And Apple Sammy is my choice;
If he wins there's more than one will rejoice,
If he's last we'll call him Old Tortoise.

23rd May, 1926.

A SPORTSMAN'S CALL: THE POINT-TO-POINT SEASON

'The brawest 'mang the whistlin' choir.'

There's many a charming thing
That stamps the end of winter—
That marks the birth of Spring:

[1] The Derby of 1926 was run on 2nd June, and Coronach won by six lengths, Colorado was third, and Apple Sammy proved himself to be a tortoise indeed for he was bang last Swift and Sure had bad luck—he ran over a dog on the course, and came in fourth.

Some wish that birds would sing ;
Give *me* the reins of ' Printer ' ![1]

The thing of charm for me
'S a ' whistler' *and* a sprinter ;
And maybe you shall see
I've found the very key
To the winning song for ' Printer.'

1st April, 1923.

DESPITE BUMPING AND BORING

And nought could make his light'ning speed diminish—
No powers were sped
To get the better of a battling finish
By one short head.

BLOOD WILL TELL

He lay too far behind
To please the trainer's mind,

[1] 'There are times in a sportsman's life when he does not feel disposed to stand and listen to birds singing—he wants something still more exciting. 'Whistlers' are to be found amongst hunters, and some of 'em good 'uns too, that will whistle, stay and sprint. Put a sportsman on the back of one of these, when he feels fit and strong, and the combined whistling of his mount and the loud cheers of the crowd as he gallops in a winner will sound sweeter in his ears than the singing of twenty thousand birds.
R.S.S.

And made his backers wonder ;
But he had the race in hand and weighed Mulatto's blunder ;

For when the straight was reached,
And the favourite fairly beached,
There came the put-off minute
To knee him tight and ride and send him out to win it.

He won it too, and well ;
Trainers may go to Hell !—
Old Jimmy knows his calling—
He knows a course like this will see a mongrel falling.

October 1921.

VOICE OF AN INVETERATE GAMBLER

If there's one thing that's ' constant in *crosses* '
It's the debt of our old parish church !
I would willingly help her, but losses
Leave *me* in the lurch.

Are *all* near the end of their tether ?—
Is it wise to put ' bobs ' on and bet ?
If each strung his shillings together
We'd wipe off the debt.

1923.

THE HANSOM[1]

['Ever since the year 1872, when I was four years of age, I have known the peculiar sensation, that delightful feeling, of riding through the streets of London in a hansom'—*From my own Diary.*]

I ALWAYS hail a hansom when I see one in the Mall,—
It's the rattle of the harness and the jingle of the bell
That makes me feel a young one in a way I cannot tell.

Adown the wooden thoroughfare we quickly slip along,
The clatter of the shoes (itself a merry song)
Makes me think I've got a bob's worth that'll do my purse no wrong.

The cabby lifts the shilling, with a smile upon his face
As I tell him he's a good 'un in the shafts to make the pace;
And he loves to tell the story how he won an Epsom race.

The old horse looks me over as if he too could tell
He'd had a true-born sportsman behind his jingling bell,—
And the way I feel his fetlock lets him *know* it now as well.

[1] In the autumn of 1925 when I went down from Scotland to Berkshire to paint Tatra, the winner of the Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket, for Major Harold Cazer, I selected a hansom (in preference to the much speedier taxi-cab) and was told by the driver that it was one of only seven registered hansoms in the whole of London.

—I dream I'm in a hansom, that I'm riding down the Mall,
With the rattle of the harness and the jingling of the bell ;
And I feel I'm still a young one in a way I cannot tell.

5th November, 1916.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON, 'LAUREATE OF THE CENTAURS'

[B. 1832 (?) at Fayal in the Azores, and lived in his youth at Cheltenham, and went to Cheltenham College ; [1] d. 24th June, 1870, in Australia. He was a great sportsman, a fine jockey, and highly cultured. His poems rank high amongst those of our minor poets. Gordon shot himself during a fit of melancholia.]

'The gool, the Gordon, and hoodie craw [2]
Were the three worst foes ever Moray saw '—
An old, old tale of the Gordons gay,
Who were 'Cocks o' the North' of a far-off day.
The lands of an Earl Athole by Bruce
Were seized and were granted to them—an excuse
For assisting his kingly cause !

Men of action, those Gordons, with manners but rude,
Not men on the whole of a bookish mood ;
Two thousand were soldiers—a warlike clan,

[1] The writer's uncle, the late Major Henry Fothergill of Copt Hall, Hawkhurst, a great man to hounds in Essex and in Hampshire, and a keen big game hunter, was at school with A. L. Gordon at Cheltenham.

[2] The darnel (a weed of the rye-grass genus), the clan Gordon, and the hooded crow.

That old and brave race that could fight to a man !
And the father of Lindsay was one of the clan,
A Gordon of Hallhead, with no fixed plan
In his life, who had soldiered too.

As a kinsman this Gordon claimed Byron the poet,
Whose odd and eccentric mother, we know it,
Was the last of the Gordons of Gight—' the craziest
Gordons of all,' so they say ; but the laziest
(Lindsay said so himself) was the ' Laureate Centaur,'
An honest, romantic, and daring dissenter
From all that's conventional.

Whether lazy or no, he has made a name
As a pilot of musical song, who can claim
(Out there) to have been the first Centaur of rhyme,
A prince in his way till the end of time ;
For his spirit now haunts the Australian Bush—
He is seen riding still, coming on with a rush
As he rode for the Melbourne Cup.[1]

The love of his boyhood's heart was the horse—
A love that amounts to a spiritual force
In one who has lived amongst ' cattle ' from
Times when he scarcely could toddle. No wonder his rhymes

[1] The Melbourne *Hunt* Cup—a steeplechase, and not the flat race which is the Blue Riband of racing in Australia.

First fell on the object so close to his heart—
That he sang of those Cotswold days, when his part
He played with the boys of the Berkeley ;

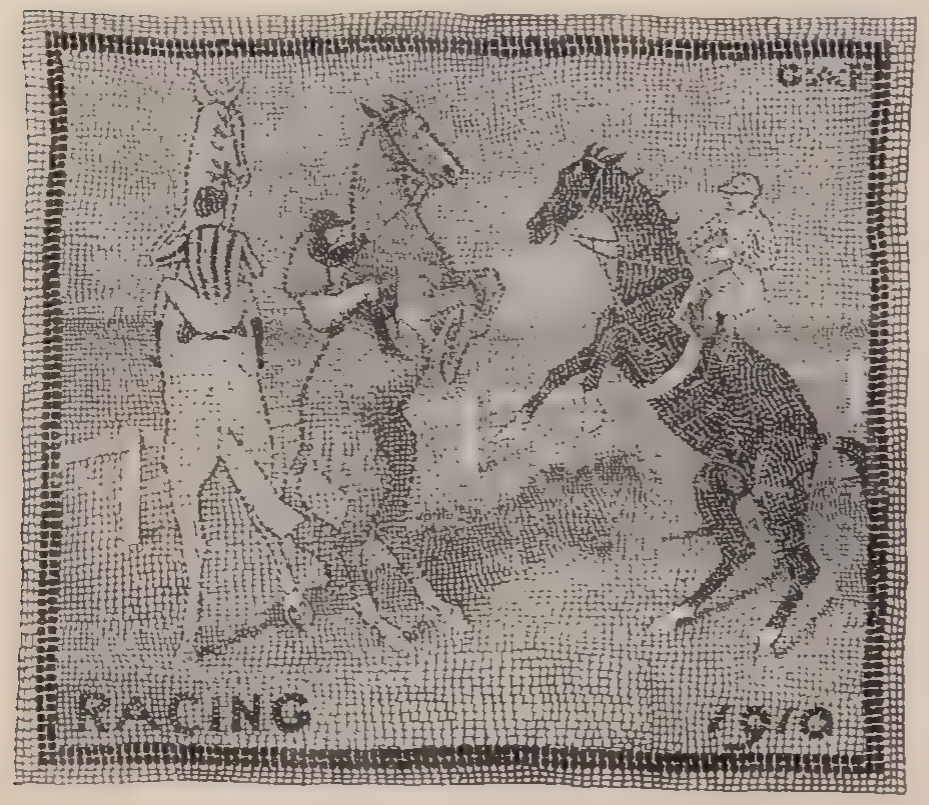
No wonder he carried his love to the land
Of the ' scrub,' and rhymed as he rode with a hand
As light on the rein as the hand that clung
To the pen overnight, that the songs he had sung
Might never be lost, might be sent to a friend
In a distant town who was ready to lend
Him a helping hand in his need.

We know that but small was that proffer'd hand,
And that boys of the Bush of the barren land,
And traders in town, were wont to tire
Of verses and rhyme, which came to inspire
Them only in after days, when the wool
Was grey on their heads, when they felt a lull
In the lilt of a Gordon dead.

Assuredly prince among poets of sport,
He sung to himself in the saddle, and taught
By his musical lay all who came in his wake,
Who—fond of true sport for sport's own sake—
For the publisher, press, or for pleasure
Tried to write in his style with the same flowing measure
That marks all his spirited rhymes.

Both Byron and Browning he loved to pore over,
But melancholy-musical Swinburne's the clover
He most often browsed on, with nature in front
And all round him. And each man of each British Hunt,
Be he sportsman and scholar combined, cannot part
With the cantering, galloping lines of his heart—
The poems of Lindsay Gordon.

20th February, 1910.



COACHING RHYMES

THE RECOLLECTION OF A WESTMORLAND COACH-HORN [1]

To George H.-le Fleming.

[From about the year 1850 to 1900 Rigg's coaches carried the mails between Windermere and Keswick, a distance of twenty-two miles through some of the most beautiful and romantic scenery in the world.

The sweetest music I ever heard were Merriman's calls on the coach-horn as they floated up the valley to where we were seated, one delightfully warm and quiet day during the summer of 1887, on the grass between a tall birch and an old Spanish chesnut opposite the front-door of Allan Bank.]

Happy days have hurried by,
Days we loved once, you and I—
Ah ! the good old days behind !
Now, the coach-horn knows no wind,
Now, the driver's whip is still
Past the lake and up the hill,
Never a sound of clink of chain
Whispering by the woods again,
Of champing bits and chattering bars—
Sweeter far than hoot of cars ;
Sixteen shoes, no, no more laid

[1] The first twenty-six lines were written first as a separate ode, entitled 'Coaching in the Lake Country,' and were published in *Country Life*, 26th January, 1924.

On the road where tar is sprayed—
No more coaches, no more horses
Charm those old Macadam courses.
Harrison and Appleton,
Greenbank and old Robinson,
Jehus once so strong and brave,
All are rotting in the grave ;
Gone, too, is the ostler race,
Engineers now take its place ;
Guards like Marcus Merriman,
Playing pipes as sweet as Pan,
Each his last rough journey's run,—
And the coaching days are done !
Where the motor rules supreme,
All the past for you—a dream.

Past for ever, must we say,
Is the glorious coaching day ?
Even so ; yet let us sing
Honour to the ' yard of tin ' !—
Melody for everyone
When the old mail-coach was run ;
Sweeter calls than those we've heard
Never flowed from any bird.
Honour to the coach of yellow !
Honour to the cheery fellow

Who as guard in days of old
Panted forth such strains of gold !
Honour to each beaver hat
And the crown whereon it sat !
Honour to the coats of red
Donned by drivers long since dead !
Honour to the teams they drove !
Each with each for glory strove.
Gone, the leaders' duplex will—
Gone, the springing at the hill ;
Gone, the tugging at the pole
By the wheelers as they stole
Bravely downwards to the dale,
Bringing safe the welcome mail ;
Gone, the handly stableman ;
Gone complete, the coaching clan :
All have hurried past the post,—
Honour to the phantom host !

Could the Maker, old Joe Deason,
Rise from earth to know the reason
Why his coaches all are broken,
We could only give this token—
That the world is larger now ;
And the people made a vow,
They would travel quicker still
Through the valley, up the hill.

Chauffeurs now with petrol horses
Swarm upon our Lakeland courses,
Rousing infants yet unborn—
Hark to hooters 'stead of horn !
Which our love will *never* win,
Who extol the ' yard of tin.'

1924.

DOWN THE ROAD—GRASMERE TO WINDERMERE—WITH THE LATE JOHN ROBINSON

' And though the coachmen of old are dead,
Though the guards are turned to clay,
There are those who remember the " yard of tin "
And the mail of the olden day.'

He showed my youth the way to handle a team of three or four ;
He showed me how to rouse a leader, and catch my thong, and more—

He taught me driving with one hand, and not with two—so common
With him that hath not learned the art, whom John would call a rum 'un !

A raw-boned chesnut, green as grass, was running once at the lead—
Now ' unicorn ' 's as bad as tandem when the leader's of stubborn breed ;

But John could cob 'im across the ears, being handy with his whip—
Though you might just as well drive eels or serpents of the deep,

Should he once choose to turn around and look you in the face—
What he can do at any moment if he dislikes the pace.

'Juist gang ye down, my lad, and cotch 'im by 'is oogly head,'
Cried John that day to me, 'we'll teach 'im how to earn 'is bread!'

In a crack I put him in his place, and then John opened thong
On each side of that ugly head—it didn't stay there long!

But didn't he just spring into his collar! and didn't we spring those hills
By the side of Winandermere and in sound of her rushing ghylls,

With the clatter of shoes and the rattle of bars as the old coach trundled along!
I hear them still, and the musical horn, and the chains and the cracking thong.

We'd many a pleasant drive together—my lessons were not a few;
He was master of all save blowing a horn—and that he could never do.

Circa 1909.

'SEND 'EM ALONG'

To the Shade of John Robinson, veteran coach-driver of Westmorland.

Twice twenty seasons have flown (it seems as yesterday)
Since I first felt the weight of your 'ribbons' and listened to Merryman's play.

You, Robinson, harnessed your horses in winter before it was dawning,
And started the mail from the Rothay at twenty-to-eight every morning.

'Unicorn' was it not in those days, with 'send 'em along' as your motto?
And up to their collars they'd spring, and for pace—well, you *could* make it hot, O!

From Grasmere to Windermere station and back, always twice in a day,
Six days of the week did you handle a team of two bays and a grey.

The distance is nine miles exactly, the road not a south country road—
Broad, flat, and straight as an arrow where motors fly now *à la mode*—

But winding and hilly and narrow, a trial for any horse power;
And you, John, including the stoppages, would do it in under the hour.

Weren't you fifty long years on the road[1]?—a post-boy to start with, then 'jehu'
To Rigg, of the old Hotel, on the coach where we once used to see you,

And be with you often an hour;—how we envied the way you could drive!
How we loved the tales that you told us to keep us in trim and alive!

[1] John Robinson, a full cousin of the late Mr. John Rigg of the Windermere Hotel, died *circa* 1905, and was buried in Grasmere cemetery. He was actively engaged on the road from 1850 to 1900.

And now we find you at rest, with the grass growing green on your
grave,
Near the spot that you yesterday drove from, free-hearted and manly
and brave.

2nd December, 1923.

THE OSTLERS OF OLD:

A MEMORY OF OLD WARWICKSHIRE

'Twas the ringing beat of the horses' feet
On the hard hard bend of the road,
That the ostlers heard with the ears of a bird
As they rushed to lighten the load.
For these were the days of the old-fashioned greys—
The days before engine and wire—
When 'man's best friend' brought you safe to the end
Of a journey through many a shire.

They'd loosen the team by the side of the Leam,
And lend a good hand to the guard,
Lifting down every lady, and taking the jady
And leading 'em straight to the yard,
Where they'd give 'em their gruel, with plenty of 'fuel'
Beside 'em in manger and rack;
And they'd pull down the boxes, like so many foxes,
In front of the *Hunter and Hack*.

Now the ostlers of old are gone I am told,
And no one has taken their place ;
The coaches are sold and, lo and behold !
The oil of the motor we trace.
The grass has grown long on those beings so strong—
The coachmen and ostlers of old ;
But still I remember their latest December,
Ere Fate turned their bones into mould.

3rd August, 1912.

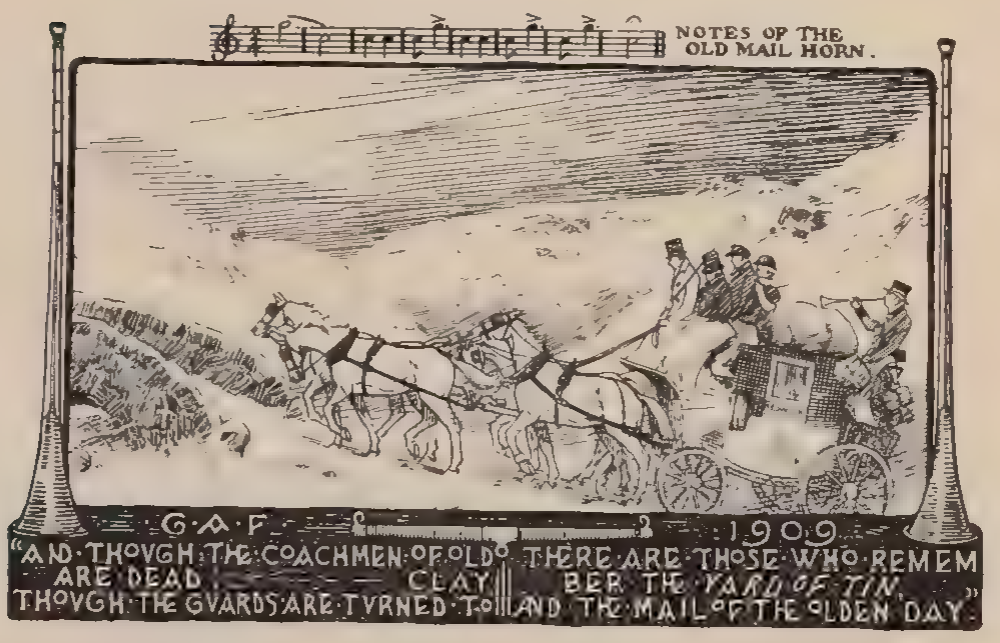




PLATE XIII.

L. AND S. FACTOR. *Champion at Peterborough in* 1913.

This portrait was done in 1914 at the Linlithgow and Stirlingshire kennels.

THE POETRY AND ARTISTRY OF SPORT

SPORTING ART

Compared with that of a hundred years ago.

The 'critics' declare we've moved not a foot ;
But this is the truth to the letter :—
The sport of it all has been just as well put,
And the art of it all much better.

16th October, 1923.

AN IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENT TO WILL OGILVIE'S 'THE TRUE SPORTSMAN'

And every real sportsman I have known has loved good art—
The work, at least, of masters of the brush who've played their part
In handing down to us the stirring pleasures of the chase,
And 'by these presents' multiplied the welfare of the race.

December, 1925.

SHOE-SICK—OF WILL OGILVIE'S 'GALLOPING SHOES'

The love of speed and music,
The love of horses too,

Is sure to turn you shoe-sick—
With lines like his for you.
By love-sick man and maiden,
We mean in love you know ;
And a shoe-sick couple's laden
With shoes just made to go.

The ringing, swinging, thrilling
Of Britain's noble sport
With love must e'er be filling
The hearts of every sort ;
And Ogilvie's sweet music,
Opposed to doggerel rot,
Will help to keep us shoe-sick
Till you and I are not.

23rd November, 1922.

A VISION OF 'ARMOUR'[1]

At Norwood, Alloa.

I SAT in a tapestried corner half asleep by a glowing fire,
With the book on my knees of old Beckford[2] that had brought me my soul's desire.

[1] The first three stanzas of this poem were inscribed, in February 1912, to my good friend J. Graeme Thomson, then of Norwood, Alloa, now of Shipton Court, Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, late joint-master of the Heythrop Hounds.

[2] Beckford's *Thoughts upon Hunting*, a new edition, illustrated by G. D. Armour.

The room I was in was the smoke-room in the home of a sportsman
at heart,
The windows were all of them latticed, and the whole of it savoured
of art.

I was dreaming of rare compositions carried out by a master's hand ;
I had visions of fairy-land colour—the schemes of the best of a band
That had painted for ages and ages the work and the fun of the chase,
And buried the science of hunting in the breast of a sport-loving race.

Just a single soft light from a burner fell gently over my head,
And lit up a plate of this artist by the page of an author dead . . .
I arose from dreams of perfection to swear that, with infinite pains,
I too would be even with 'Armour'—if he'd lend me his helm full
of brains !

A rare type of sportsman and painter is this one—great centaur
of art !
We bow to him even in Edin, the place where he made his start—
That suggestive elimination, that flowing selective line,
That character, humour and action, we kneel to without e'er a whine.

He's interpreted sport for the sportsman as none have on canvas
before,
When he shows us with touch of a master the essence of hunting lore.

The breadth of his simple handling—its vigour sustained without rush—
Is the fruit of a strong personality flowing forth from the point of his brush.

The beauty of Crawhall's[1] dug deep in him—his spacing and dainty ways ;
And the tone of the two Alexanders,[2] good friends of his boyhood days—
Their restraint and judicious colour—had come to his timely aid :
Of all three in his hot-bed of painting he has shovelled much in with his spade.

Mark well how he handles the pencil—how he chalks in his horses and rubs
In the tones of their coats with the speed of Velazquez, a Marshall,[3] a Stubbs—
Faith ! he shows us he loves what is sporting, and most of all hunting, of course ;
And he proves too there's truth in the motto, the best friend we have is the horse.

[1] Joseph Crawhall (born at Morpeth 1861, d. 1913), one of the greatest artists of all time.

[2] The late Robert Alexander, R.S.A., and his son, the late Edwin Alexander, R.S.A., R.W.S., two very distinguished artists.

[3] Benjamin Marshall, the famous sporting painter of the beginning of last century.

Deep down in the heart of each sportsman George Armour was ever
at rest ;
But in serious breasts he may linger to be ranked along with the best.
We wish him God speed with his pictures, success for all time to his art ;
From the ken of the Edinburgh people his spirit will never depart.

25th November, 1912.

TOM SMITH OF ARIZONA'S SHARE IN DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS' 'ROBIN HOOD'

He'd broken the fighting spirit of many a horse had that broncho-
buster,
That big strong raw-boned cowboy, and made an abject, harmless
weed of it,
And rounded many a hurtling steed upon the plains ;
Yet never, never in all his life had had the pains
To take a quiet horse and make a rearing, snorting steed of it.
But this he set to work to do for *Robin Hood's* grand muster.

Tom Smith found horses fleet of foot to justify the bluster ;
And he built a platform two feet high, and talked to them as people,
That they must learn to raise themselves and rear ; and soon,
With care and patience, had them pawing after the moon.
Then, at the camera call, came rushing past yon ancient steeple
Two hundred prancing, snorting steeds for *Robin Hood's* grand muster.

Each knight of old with shield and pennon'd lance—a valiant thruster ;
Each horse bedizened with caparison and jewelled trappings ;
And the Lists are full. Hard-bitten gallants face each other ;
They charge, they close,—one lies dethroned for the dust to smother !
The victor waves aloft his pennon, high walls resound with clappings ;
And the Queen of Beauty crowns the scene of *Robin Hood's* grand muster.

24th January, 1924.

FAITH AND FICTION

[A mean and cunning editor to himself, after forwarding a cheque for 3s. 9d to a generous poet-artist.]

'A FIVE-GUINEA picture for nothing ! a poem at three-and-nine !—
If you've any more like 'em at that price just tell us *before* we dine ;
And we'll order a barrel of oysters, a turbot and lobster sauce,
To be followed by turkey and pudding, with a magnum of Moët, of course.'

[Poet-artist to the editor.]

'I lent you my note-paper heading ;[1] I sent you a lyric of mine,
Expecting you'd spare me a guinea—instead of just three-and-nine !

[1] The artist had had no difficulty in disposing of the original of this design to a M.F.H. for five guineas *before* he had offered the use of his private print to the editor.



PLATE XIV

GREEN MEAT. *'Chasers passing through a Lothian farmsteading at Cramond Bridge, the author's home since* 1912, *when the picture was painted*

You've found me a weasel asleep, have you ?—you think I will send
you some more ?

So I would if you'd pay me in reason, but *not* on your terms of yore.
—Well, I'll *give* you the use of that lyric and give you the use of my art,
And I send back your cheque with this message, that weasels and
X——Y must part ! '

THE BLACK AND THE WHITE OF IT

(Lines beneath a design entitled ' A Diana's Seat.')

Look at the Black and the White of it !
Look at the Truth and the Might of it !—
The magical gloss and the glitter,
The ease of each habited sitter !
Subtle the centre and cunning the border,
Brilliant the horses adorning the border—
Stallions in gallop and stallions a-pawing—
Grecian in spirit but British in drawing.
Look at the life and the art of it !
Look at each touch in each part of it !—
Every one strong in its telling,
Skill of a life study spelling.
Look at the Truth and the Might of it !
Look at the Black and the White of it !

28th September, 1915.

MY OLD STUDENT DAYS, AND OTHER RHYMES

MY OLD STUDENT DAYS

The voice of the past is speaking again :
I am young, I am rich, and have leisure ;
No ties, no anxieties to worry the brain,
And little to think of but pleasure.

The shadows of all the sweet years that have been
On a canvas move swiftly before me ;
And each detail seems etched on a visionary screen,
So's to blot out the days that are stormy—

And stormy they were, the dark days of my past,
They drift through this bosom with sorrow
To leave me crestfallen all day while they last—
Though I leave 'em behind on the morrow.

But the sweetness—the honey—the long-enjoyed clover
Of old comrades, old times, and old ways
Is beside me once more,—and I love to pore over
The best of my old student days.

And what were the best of my days as a student,
Untrammell'd by Dean or by Don ?

Were they never ways other than straight-laced and prudent ?
P'r'aps not, but they passed smoothly on.

Was it football, or cricket, or rowing that held me
Entranced for a while with its charms ?
No, the Powderhall runners and jumpers impelled me
To couple myself to their arms :

Timber-topping and long-jump and cross-country running [1]
Were the pastimes nearest my heart ;
Of the gentler pursuits (please, excuse me for punning)
There were *none* that were nearer than art.[2]

I attended in turn, under no sort of pressure,
Each class as a matter of course—
They were neither a bore nor a 'ticular pleasure,
Which I write without any remorse.

But dissecting I loved as I loved its Professor,[3]
An anatomist born, and a man

[1] The writer was one of the three undergraduates to set on foot the Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds, and was their first vice-captain. He was also one of the athletic team selected to compete against the London United Hospitals in June 1891, and in the same year was runner-up in the long jump at the Scottish Championship Meeting, held at Queen's Park, Glasgow. In 1890 and 1891 he was one of the best hurdlers in Scotland.

[2] Before he graduated (in 1895) the writer had published his first of twenty-five books, viz. *A Riding Retrospect.*

[3] Sir William Turner, K.C.B., F.R.S., LL.D., D.C.L., D.Sc., M.B., F.R.C.S., Prof. of Anatomy, Univ. Edin., afterwards Principal of the University.

Who will e'er hold his own with any successor—
Yea, find me a better who can.

Could I ever forget, too, the words of a writer [1]
Of a good little book, *Looking Back?*
Than our friend 'Honest John' not a surgeon stood mightier
In the eyes of his clinical pack.

'Twas with *him* once I worked with the zeal of a fool,
When I came to be Instrument-clerk,
And prepared for my chief at an 'opp' every tool—
Save the saw which I left in the dark!

Some had seen the mistake—I could see by their faces—
And were shuffling their feet with a vengeance;
I deserted my post at the leg and made paces
Upstairs with the speed of two engines

And grabbed at the saw in its cupboard and forthwith
Flew back—just in time—before Chiene [2]
Put a hand to the tray for the weapon to saw with—
And think it aseptically clean!

[1] John Chiene, Professor of Surgery, Univ. Edin., C.B., LL.D., M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S. (Edin.).

[2] Professor Chiene had already made his incisions down to the bone, and then turned to the class of a hundred students in the theatre to lecture for a few minutes, and his attention was further taken up by his two chief assistants, Wallace and Stiles (now Lt.-Col. Sir David Wallace, K.B.E., C.M.G., and Colonel Sir Harold J. Stiles, K.B.E.), who had seen the writer's blunder. In these far-off days all the instruments for an operation were supposed to be soaked in carbolic acid overnight.

When older I grew—and must I add idler ?—
I purchased a horse, and then more ;
And by 'Varsity friends I was voted a sidler
For keeping a stable and four.

Yet I rode and I hunted in spite of the saying—
Th' unstudentlike deed it was done ;
And I zealously entered that best form of playing
To enjoy a few seasons of fun.[1]

But, to bring a long story short, I went back to
My books and my patients of yore,
Still preferring at heart a good huntsman and pack to
A ' Prof ' and his medical lore.

I got my degree [2]—and by painstaking ways—
Though I won it *not quite* in a canter !
And this is the tale of my old student days
Which I willingly leave you to banter.

8th October, 1911.

[1] He was a member of the Linlithgow and Stirlingshire Hounds in 1892 and 1893, and also a regular follower of the Pytchley Hounds in 1896 and 1897, and has enjoyed odd days with thirty-nine other packs in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

[2] At the special Graduation Ceremony, October 1895.

AT RATHO HALL IN WAR TIME

What muster of peacocks ! what building of rooks !
What a flight of the ' Nuns ' that we read of in books !
What yelping of puppies ! what barking of dogs !
As we near the Miss Thomsons now sawing up logs.

What Turkish tobacco to fly to the core !
What tea and what cream, without sugar—O War !
What scones and what butter ! what raspberry jam !—
What torrents of rain to ride home in [1]—O damn !

21st September, 1918.

ON LAMBOURN DOWNS

Oh, these lovely days of leisure,
Free from worry, full of pleasure !

[1] I had the pleasure (?) of riding an unbroke four-year old five miles back to Kirkliston in the worst storm of rain nearly that I've even been out in. My patients were waiting for me.

The three ladies to whom I allude in this rhyme used to hunt regularly with the L. and S. in old days, and until her death were the bosom friends of Mrs. Cheape ('The Squire' of Bentley Manor, Worcestershire), mother of the three famous sportsmen of that name, including the finest British polo player of his day.

In my hand a sketching block,
In my sight a southern flock,
Overhead the bluest sky,
Underneath, whereon I lie,
Saw-wort, scabious, creeping harrow,
Mouse-ear'd hawksweed, clustering yarrow ;
In my ears (to increase the spell)
Comes the sound of tinkling bell,
Hung upon the foremost wether,
Keeping all the rest together ;
Not a single house in sight
Save the shelter on my right
Where I've chained the willing horse,
After flying up the course
Of the classic Lambourn Downs,
Far away from crowded towns.
Oh, the feeling of that ride,
Increasing pace at every stride !
None to challenge, none to beat—
Just the gallop—there's the treat !

Let the jockey win his races,
Whether flat or steeplechases,
Mounted on the cleverest horses
Over all the best of courses,
So may I have one to own

For a gallop here alone :
And with soul and flesh at peace
I would ever sketch at ease.

20th August, 1913.

THE MORAL OF OLD DARLEY

Now this is how old Darley
The joy of life doth seek
At his farm beside New Barley,
Not far away from Leek.

The old soul never alters ;
He lives on in the dales
With the faith that never falters
And the strength that never fails.

You'll find him in the day-time
'Mong his men about the fields,
Where he's sure to be in hay-time
With a fork that never yields.

When the harvest's done and over,
And winter's just set in,
He's still an active mover
For the ploughing will begin ;

An' he likes a bit o' sportin'
When he pops into the plough
A young 'un he has bought in
A sale at Windy Gow ;

His eye's as straight as ever,
And his guiding arm so strong,
That they go up hill together
And down with nothing wrong.

When all is past with ploughing
And redden'd is the land,
He sees about the sowing
And shows his slight of hand.

And when he's done with sowing
He's off upon his mare
Beside the ' thrusters ' showing
The farmer, too, can tear :

His mount was once a 'chaser,
And knows her business well—
How to gallop like a racer
And leap and stay as well.

He can ' take his liquor fairly '
And his victuals fairly too,

But you see him smoking rarely
Till the toddy-time is due.

Just watch him when it's night-time
Shut the Book he's read and read,—
For he always knows the right time
To turn into his bed ;

And when he's in he's snoring
Afore he's turned him twice ;
An' he's up at four each morning,
As game as rats and mice,

An' out to do his milkin'
Afore the dawn of day—
Afore your farmer Wilkin
Has put his cards away.

* * * * *

Much work that's hard and true, man,
Some play that's fringed with sense,
The love of one good woman—
And the joy of life's immense.

18th January, 1916.

AT USHER'S BREWERY

To George Usher, Esq.

I SKETCHED to the tune of a champing bit,
And lunched to the ring of a hammer—
The sketch was a sketch of your game little 'tit,'[1]
The lunch was a 'weal an' 'ammer.'

The coopers were hooping the staves of a cask
In the yard of the best of breweries,
And I sat me down to my lightsome task
In sound of them beating like Furies.

But give me the tune of a champing bit,
With the feel of a polo pony,
An' I'd lose my lunch (and perhaps my wit)
Riding till I was bony!

1911.

A STUDY IN BAY

COME, I'll show you a pony, the best in my stable,
The hunter in miniature heard of in fable,
That none can outrival, or chesnut or sable,
Or brown or a bay, or roan or a grey,—
Such a pony you'll see in my stable to-day.

[1] One of his three polo ponies stabled at the Brewery in Edinburgh.

What quarters to boast of, what arms, what a thigh !
And hocks near the ground and a head set on high,
With a heart for the game that will never say die,
Has this study before me in brightest of bay,
Which you'll never forget when you've seen her to-day.

Her muzzle's as red as a pork polony,
Her ears as quick as the ears of a cony ;
And that is the truth of my polo pony,—
Not a chesnut or sable, or brown or a grey,
But a study before me in brightest of bay.

She can change all her feet in a trot or a canter
On limbs quite as lithe as the limbs of a panther,
And in galloping lets not another supplant her,
Does this study before me in brighest of bay,
Which you'll surely declare when you're on her to-day.

How she follows the ball in and out of the players !
How easy to ride !—the best of conveyers—
The handiest of guides, and a Queen amongst stayers,
This study before me in brightest of bay,
Without e'en a rival whatever you say.

1911.

'BONNINGTON'—A FOUR-YEAR OLD CHESNUT

To a friend in need of a good mount

SIRED by a hackney (the sire of three Queens),
Foal of a mare of the Waler breed ;
Petted and fed by a girl in her teens ;
Schooled in the ways of a sportsman's creed—
This is the pony for you in your need.

All's well that ends well on straw and on sward :
Time *was* when I found some Australian tricks—
Tricks of the race of a station abroad,
Bucking and sidling and fore and aft kicks ;—
I soon knocked 'em out with the aid of my sticks.

Gifted with spirit—the pluck of his dam ;
Made of the tendon and bone of his sire ;
Playful as kitten and kind as a lamb,
Good-looking withal—what more d'ye require ?
Tell me at once that I have you a buyer.

Peering through bridle as straight as an arrow,
Six mile an hour he can amble and walk,
Passing the traffic as cool as a sparrow ;
Pricks up his ears whenever I talk
(I talk to 'em always no matter what balk.)



PLATE XV.

Champion of the Lists.

Exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in 1912.

Take him on grass ;—now here he excels,
You feel there is power from saddle to hoof ;
And his bellows don't suffer—the pace never tells.
The *eating* of pudding is sure the best proof,
So fill up your stall, and send me the oof.

14th September 1918.

TO POLO

Coupled with the name of Walter Buckmaster, undisputed polo prince, and one of the best and hardest men to hounds of any period.

Our young men still may spur the heel,
And sport 'cap,' 'coat' and 'leathers,'—
Compared with covering wrought of steel
Almost as light as feathers :
Heads once were made to carry weight,
And not to carry knowledge ;
But all that's past and out of date—
Heads now bring brains from College.

The lance exchanged for polo stick,
The sword for cutting whip,
We catch glad sounds of willow click
And sight good horsemanship.
It's still a mimic war of course,
With each one quick as a cony

Not mounted on an armoured horse
But on a polo pony,
Not striking at a block of steel
But at a ball of wood,
And twisting with it like an eel
As brave as ' Robin Hood.'

And if there chance an accident—
A ' charger ' slip or fall—
It's ten to one no detriment
To pony, man and all.
Long live the fighting polo game,
Buckmaster with it too—
The old Cantab whose famous name
Stands first in *Sports Who's Who.*

24th April, 1924.

FROM NIGERIA TO ALGIERS WITH CAPTAIN ANGUS BUCHANAN

[Lines written after reading a short account of his journey across the great desert. Captain Buchanan covered 3500 miles and more on one camel, the only one of thirty-six to complete the course, and it died, poor thing, when it had just passed the winning post Of fifteen natives only two reached the end, and two out of three Europeans]

The Sahara desert is drying out :
Water is less above and about,
Leaving the lives of all in doubt.

O'er pebble and rock and sandy ground
For days together no green thing found ;
And rain ?—never a sight or sound !

Rock and stone are in steady decay,
With sand upon sand to bar the way,—
Camels will never cross here one day.

Jogging along on a camel's back,
With the sun beating down on the sandy track,
Is *not* like the feel of a Warwickshire hack !

Willing for Country his life to lend,
Just for some unknown news to send,
He ransacked the Desert from end to end.

Flour and water, water and flour,
Made into paste that soon turns sour,
With dried meat and dates—the sum of his power.

Cowering close to the sun-baked ground,
Huddled together beside a mound,
Feeling the bite where storms abound,—

Hedonist he ? Oh, no, no, no !—
Happiness out of pain and woe
Cheer the explorers as they go.

* * * * *

The camel he cared for night and day,
The moment he left it, he heard them say,
Sank on his knees and passed away !

15th June, 1923.

FLOREANT HERALDICA

To Sir James Balfour Paul, K.C.V.O., Lyon King of Arms.

THE vain display of armoury was a weakness once we bore ;
And we are weak, and we have loved our own heraldic lore—
We've loved the feudal badges and the quaint conceits of yore.

The blazon'd shield, the crested helm in which a warrior fought,
The marshalling, the cadency, and all the Heralds taught
In the grammar of our heraldry, our minds to old times brought.

Mysterious pictures, they in the Anglo-Norman language lie
To give (when learned) the student zest and zeal for history—
O, floreant heraldica—O, may they never die !

2nd March, 1921.

MY OLD NURSERY

I WANT to see old Binswood [1] once more before I die ;
I want to see its nursery, where I would laugh and cry,
Where all of us built houses with bricks of wooden ware—
And never thought of castles built only in the air ;
Where each one found a playmate,—for all went smoothly there,—
And where I was taught the alphabet on a high-backed baby chair.

I'd love to take my boy there (he's just as keen and bold)
And see him ride the rocking-horse like me in days of old :—
Bare-backed, without the irons, I'd ride that dappled horse
For days and days together—and never off the course ;
'Twas he that taught me balance, and he that gave me grip—
I could ride without the reins then, and never used a whip.

Now Binswood is a girls' school, a stranger treads the floor,
And the name is changed to Clarendon,—I may never see it more.
The nursery's now a bedroom, the wooden bricks are burnt,
The rocking-horse is broken, and the lessons—*are* they learnt,

[1] Binswood House, Leamington, in Warwickshire, which became my father's property in 1868, and remained in the family until 1925. At one time my father had various tenants for it, including the late Earl of Southesk, the late Marquis of Ailesbury, and Major Ashton, when he was Master of the North Warwickshire ; and Lord Lawrence leased the stables during two seasons ; so that the old home must have seen a great many hunting people over a period of fifty years.

The lessons we were taught there by the best of nurses going ?
God grant that I may meet her when the Reaper's done His mowing.
Oh ! I want to see the nursery where I would laugh and cry ;
I want to see old Binswood once more before I die.

31st December, 1911.

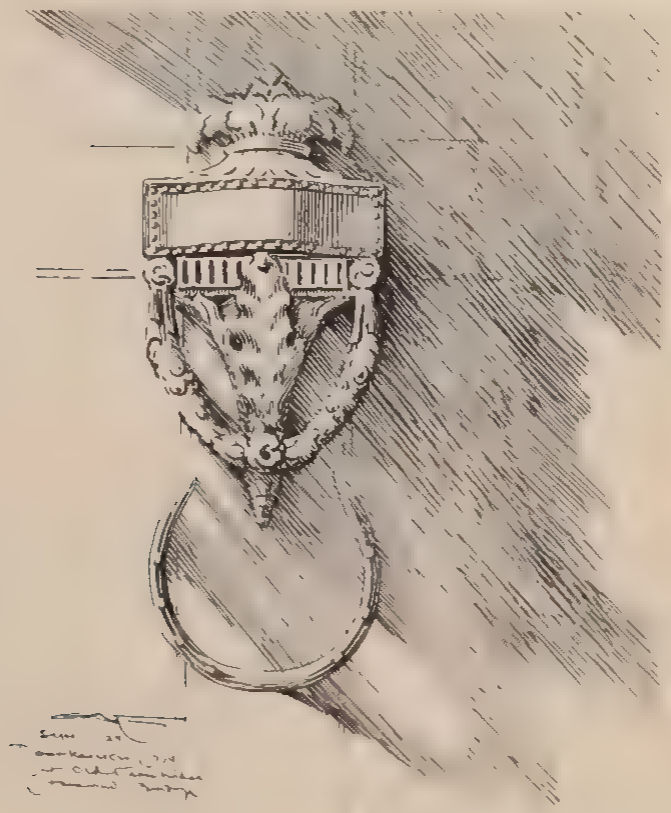




PLATE XVI.

Pensioned Off. *Portrait of a boy's pony belonging to Herbert Straker, Esq., M.F.H., of Hartforth Grange, Richmond, Yorks.*

Reproduced from an auto-lithograph done by the author in 1900.

COBWEBS FROM A WINE CELLAR

TO HUMPHREY TAYLOR, LTD.

'Premier Liqueur Distillers of Great Britain.'

THE 'Wines of Life' came not too late—
And but for you I might have missed 'em.
They stimulate, they fascinate,—
They recuperate the whole nerve system.

* * * * * *

As she'd had a deal of work to bore her,
I gave a glass of it to Isa,
And can assure you your JUNORA
Is a potent, prompt revitalizer.

6th October, 1911.

A LONDON WINE-MERCHANT'S ADDRESS

COME, I'll show you some elegant wines of Rothschild's growth,
Of generous soft vinosities,
Zion Melaga and Marsala, both
Quite regular curiosities.
Gonzalez sherry here you'll find from Spain,
That was bottled in 'fifteen.

But my choicest wines are port and dry champagne,
Of best vintage ever been.

This grand old tawny port, matured in cask,
Has a seal of greenish hue,—
To hear of which and to hunt it down's a task
Within the grip of few,
So rare is it with flavour fine, so nice,
Not heavy nor yet heady ;
I purchased it at half the shipping price
When prices were unsteady.

Moët's champagne you see in yonder bin
Is not for tavern sinner,
But for the epicure to drink to win
Him appetite for dinner.
A bankrupt agent's stock of claret's mine,
Soft and velvety to taste,
Stylish and pretty, bouquet sweet—a wine
To take in no great haste.

That *Hieland* whisky's bonded twenty years,
It's mellow, smooth, and mild—
A perfect revelation to calm your fears,—
It would not hurt a child.
You say your friends are many, young and frisky—
Well, you cannot here go wrong,

For they'll so appreciate your old Scotch whisky
That you will not keep it long !

The costs are low ; so order, not delaying,
At price unprecedented ;
And I will give you credit and release from paying
Just now, if you're prevented ;

(*In an undertone*)
And when the far off day of settling comes,
And your house is stormed by bailiffs,
Drink all that's left, get drunk, and dream of sums
Your friends (?) *might* pay the bailiffs !

Please Note, the only wine to swallow during
The Heat Wave, while it lasts,
Is *my* light still Moselle, renown'd for curing
And for the man who fasts.

1910.

IMPROMPTU

Ach ! Schloss Johannesburg ! of greatest ' breed '
(At thirty ' bob ' a bottle !)
What elegance and richness unsurpassed—
For slipping down the throttle !

20th December, 1920.

A WINE-MERCHANT'S ADDRESS TO A CAVALRY REGIMENT

Ye sporting fighting-men, who've done your bit,
Come, taste this velvet wine of great renown,
And drown your grief in soft *Chateau Laffitte*,
Quite *fit* for use and well worth '*laying down*.'

N.B. Mind ye, where'er through Chablis ye may roam,
There's none, ye'll find, to beat *Meursault Labaume*.

20th December, 1920.



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